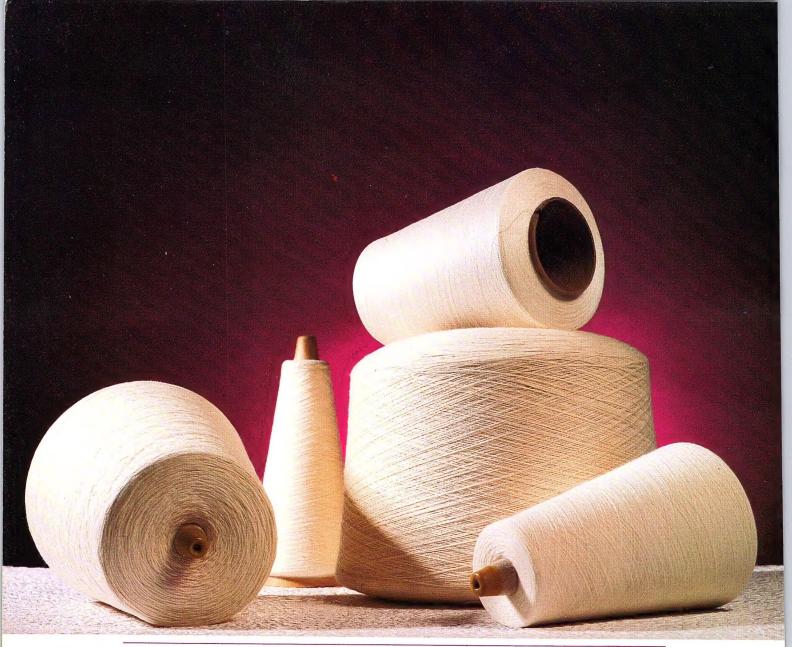
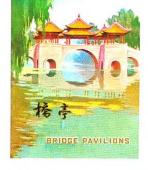


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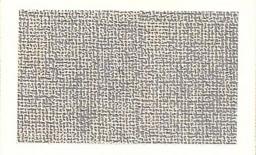
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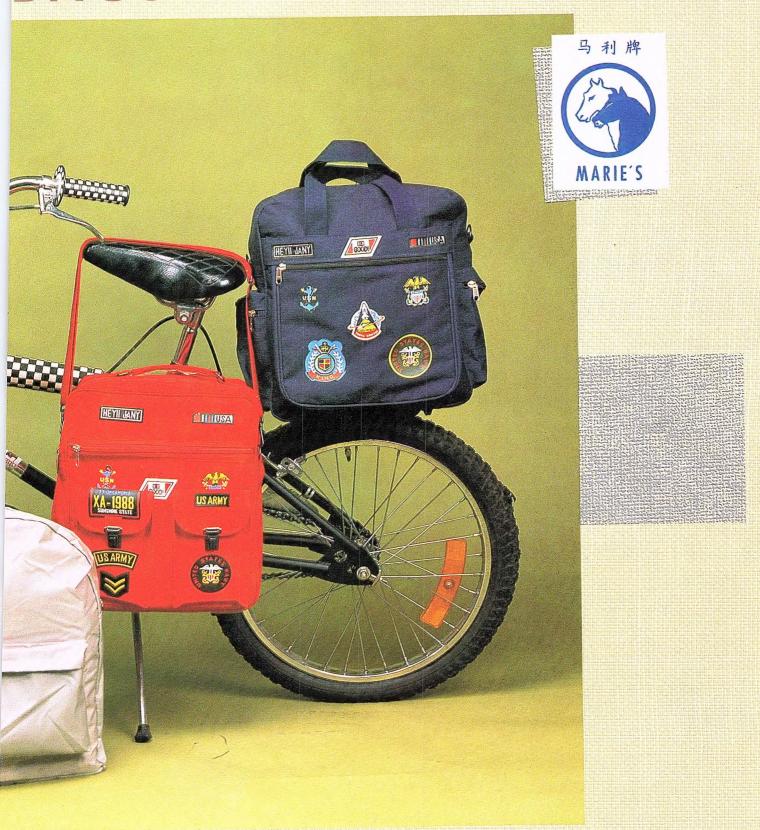
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EDITORIAL

A Man-Made Marvel

This month we present the first of two issues devoted to China's famous Grand Canal, still the largest man-made waterway in the world. Snaking its way down the eastern side of China as it links five major river systems, this mighty canal can be traced back over 2,400 years.

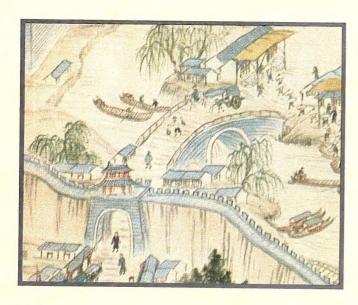
Our leading articles are primarily the work of four Chinese photojournalists who spent three months travelling the 1,780 kilometres of the Grand Canal from north to south by car and boat, on foot and — on one occasion — by helicopter, the latter resulting in the magnificent aerial pictures of our opening feature. Their booty — over 10,000 photographs reflecting the extreme diversity of this trip in terms of people, lifestyles, architecture ... even food!

We focus first on the canal sections in the north of China from Beijing through Hebei, Tianjin and Shandong to the northern borders of Jiangsu. Although it seems to be the sections further south in Jiangsu and Zhejiang which have the richest artistic and literary associations, as it passes through Shandong the canal skirts many places which will sound familiar to those who have read *Outlaws of the Marsh* (see our Literary Link for an amusing excerpt from this Ming-dynasty classic).

As it facilitated communications and transport between north and south, the Grand Canal became a conduit for trade and cultural exchange and a magnet for foreign merchants. Its role in funnelling grain from the fertile ricegrowing south to the imperial court in the arid North China Plain continued to be of prime importance until the complex silting/flooding problems in Shandong associated with the massive swing in course of the Huanghe (Yellow River) and the coming of the railways late last century. All these aspects, too, we examine in our Special Features section.

In other articles we turn to a little-known minority people. The Mosuo of northwestern Yunnan have come under the spotlight recently owing to their matriarchal society and their *azhu* system, involving a loose bonding between lovers rather than a fixed marriage, with the mother solely responsible for her children. A change of climate too as we head into a glittering world of snow and ice among the Qilian Mountains in China's northwest, accessible by — of all creatures — camels.

And, among other topics, we gain more insight into Chinese culture with the Shaanxi shadow play; leather puppets and stage sets are manipulated to dramatic effect by puppeteers versed in a performing art with a tradition of centuries.







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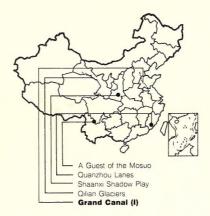
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Front cover: The Li Canal, successor to the ancient Hangou Canal, snakes past Gaoyou in northern Jiangsu (by Yu Zhixin)







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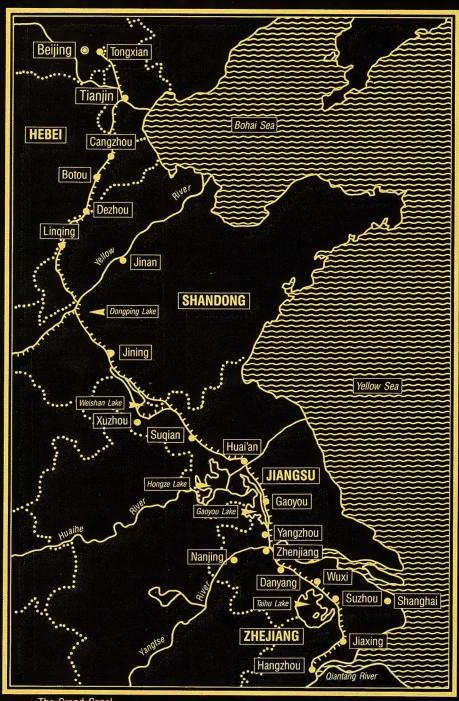
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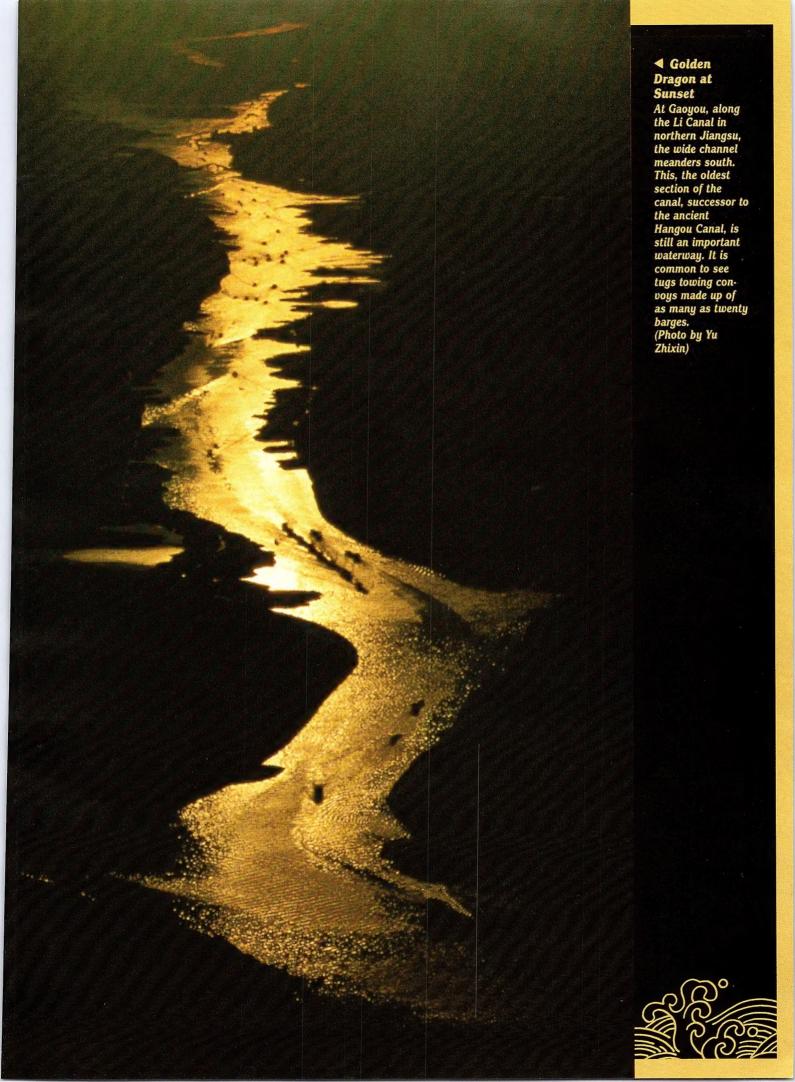
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A Bird's-Eye View of the Grand Canal

PHOTOS BY BAO KUN, DENG LILI, YU ZHIXIN & ZHANG HAIBO ARTICLE BY BAO KUN



The Grand Canal





◄ Green Silk Thread

Over Botou in Hebei, all you can see is a tenuous thread of water glistening in its bed, hemmed in between dense clusters of houses of rammed earth. Beyond and all around stretches the featureless immensity of the North China Plain.

▼ The Lake Crossing

Although the Grand Canal meets and incorporates many bodies of water along its course, the most interesting of these encounters is where it cuts right through Lake Weishan in Shandong, the differing depth and composition of the water evident in the change of colour. Boats, their sails lowered, look like a sprinkling of sesame seeds.

he rotors spun ever faster and our helicopter suddenly lifted off the ground; the puildings, roads and people below shrank as we rose. As we hovered over Shahe, an airport north of Beijing, we spotted a green thread of water meandering away into the distance. This was the famous Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal.

From its northernmost point at the Baifu Fountain near the Ming Tombs outside Beijing, the Grand Canal winds through the municipalities of Beijing and Tianjin, as well as the provinces of Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, to end at the Genshan Dock in Hangzhou. Unlike most of China's major rivers, which flow from west to east, the Grand Canal runs north and south down the eastern side of the country. Linking five river systems, namely the Haihe, the Huanghe (Yellow River), the Huaihe, the Yangtse and the Qiantang, the canal as it now stands is 1,780 kilometres long, the largest man-made waterway in the world.

The origin of this mighty work — like the Great Wall a piecemeal operation taking countless centuries — can be dated back to the later part of the Spring and Autumn Period. In the year 486 B.C. an initial 185-kilometre-long canal, Hangou, was excavated on the plains of eastern China on the orders of Prince Fuchai of Wu in order to facilitate his troop movements. This connected the lower part of the Yangtse with the lower Huaihe.

During the Warring States Period, in the fourth century B.C. Huiwang, King of Wei, excavated the Honggou Canal to connect the Huaihe and the Huanghe. Then, in 210 B.C., Emperor Shihuang of the Qin dynasty extended the Hangou Canal by sixty-two kilometres to strengthen his control of the areas south of the Yangtse.

In the year 204, under the nominal rule of the Eastern Han, the powerful statesman Cao Cao had the Nan (Southern) Canal dug north of the Huanghe and, during the subsequent Three Kingdoms Period, extended his project with the Baigou Canal between the Huanghe and the Haihe. The civilization of the north,







centred in the Huanghe Basin, filtered slowly southeast to the Yangtse Valley.

Over the succeeding centuries the canal system was greatly expanded by dredging rivers and linking them via artificial waterways, particular progress being made under the Sui emperor Yangdi (reign dates 604-618), when the canal attained a length of 2,700 kilometres. Yangdi ordered the building of canals radiating northeast to Beijing and southeast to Hangzhou — both around one thousand kilometres long — from his capital Luoyang. This opened the way to

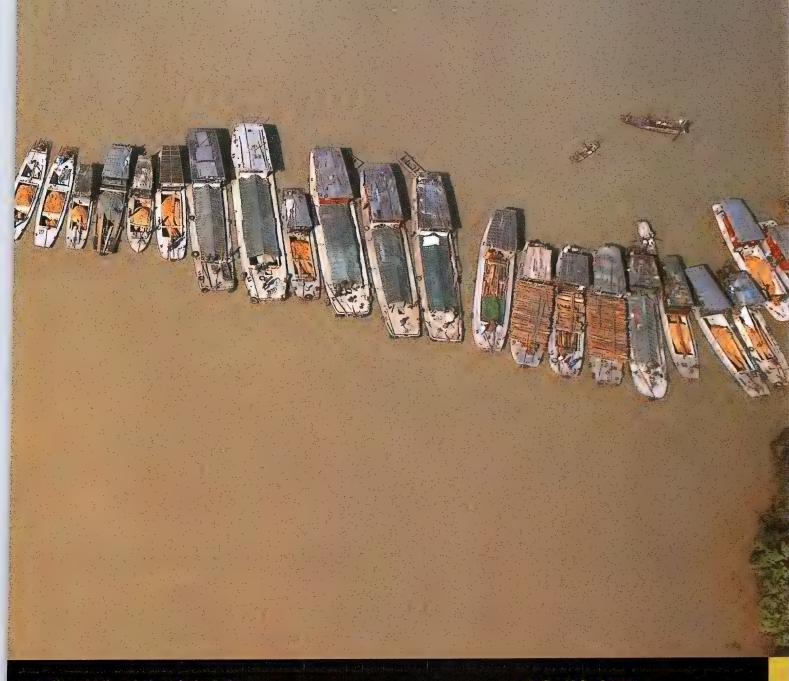
the fertile lands of the south for his successors, the Tang and Northern Song dynasties, and gave rise to the flowering of cultural centres such as Hangzhou, Suzhou and Yangzhou.

The next major changes came with the Mongols. Siting his capital well to the northeast in Beijing, Kublai Khan (reign dates 1260-1294) of the Yuan dynasty found the existing waterway network inadequate. He completed the stretch of canal from Beijing to Tongxian (from where goods previously had to be carried overland), and streamlined the

entire system, shortening it to its present length by the insertion of the Lu Canal. The perfected Grand Canal became a lifeline for the Yuan, Ming and Qing courts, supplying them with both necessities and luxury goods: tea, rice, sugar, fruit, silk, paper and writing materials, pearls, flowers, timber, stone and other building wares.

Countless renovation, improvement and maintenance projects were carried out during later dynasties, but the unpredictable nature of the Huanghe — appropriately nicknamed 'China's sorrow' — eventually proved too





much. When the Huanghe burst its banks in 1855 and changed its course, it blocked a 100-kilometre section of the Grand Canal through Shandong Province which silted up, bringing navigation to a halt. Before repairs could be undertaken, the river overflowed again, with even more disastrous consequences. Deprived of their livelihood, cities and towns along the unnavigable sections declined rapidly.

The Grand Canal suffered neglect for many decades around the turn of the century but, since 1949, sluice gates have been rebuilt and

▲ Canal Anchorage

From Tai'erzhuang on the Shandong border to Huai'an in northern Jiangsu, the Zhong Canal flows wide and deep. This is a busy waterway of great commercial and industrial significance, with barges plying back and forth continuously. Lighters carrying sand, gravel, coal, grain and timber moor in midstream to await their tugs.

new ones put in place, lakes have been harnessed to act as regulating reservoirs, dykes have been repaired and massive flood-control measures have been implemented, so that many sections now again play an important role in domestic transport.

Today's Grand Canal can be divided into

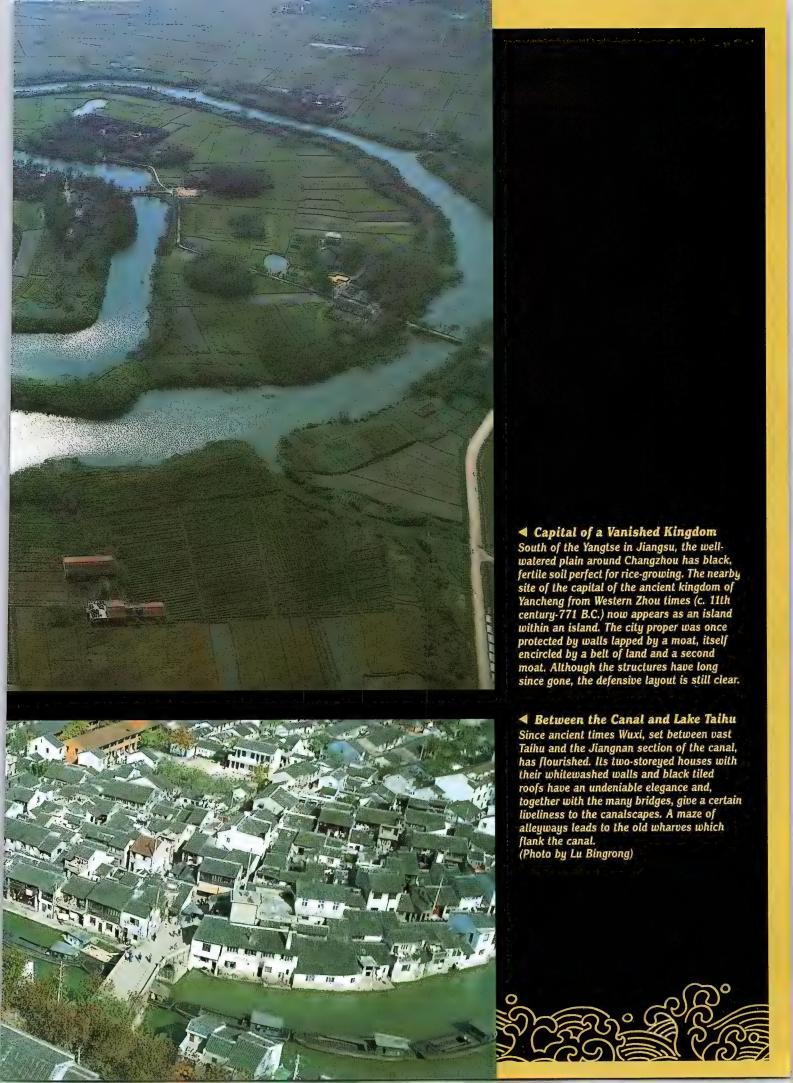
Today's Grand Canal can be divided into seven sections (not all navigable): the River Tonghui from Beijing to Tongxian; the Bei (Northern) Canal from Tongxian to Tianjin; the Nan Canal from Tianjin to Linqing in Shandong; the Lu Canal from Linqing to Tai'erzhuang; the Zhong (Middle) Canal from Tai'erzhuang to Huai'an in Jiangsu; the Li Canal from Huai'an to Yangzhou; and the Jiangnan Canal from Zhenjiang to Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang.

A journey along the Grand Canal is a journey through history, but it is also a celebration of China's diversity. And what better way to appreciate it than from the air, as we did?

Translated by Wang Mingjie











◀ Taihu Fisheries

Taihu Fisheries

On the fringes of Wuxi, out in the lake, rectangular fishponds — each with its surrounding dyke — create a mosaic of green and brown. Through them runs the River Liangxi heavy with barge traffic: a vivid illustration of the tangled skein of canals, rivers and lakes which forms the watery landscape of southern Jiangsu.

GRAND CANAL (I)

The Grand Canal: Glimpses of Land and People (I)

PHOTOS BY BAO KUN, DENG LILI, YU ZHIXIN & ZHANG HAIBO ARTICLE BY BAO KUN



n the year 605 Emperor Yangdi of the Sui dynasty (569-618) gave the order to embark on a colossal project to dredge an old artificial waterway northwest of present-day Kaifeng in Henan Province and link it with the River Huaihe in the east. During the course of work he extended the then existing canal system to cover a distance of 2,700 kilometres, from Zhuojun (now Beijing) in the north to Yuhang (now Hangzhou) in the south, with his new capital of Dongcheng (Luoyang) as its centre. This was all intended to tighten his grip over his territory and promote economic development. It is also said that he had it in mind how much easier it would be to travel to Jiangdu (now Yangzhou in Jiangsu) on pleasure trips. Unfortunately, his dissipated lifestyle soon caused his downfall - he was assassinated after a reign of only thirteen years while tarrying in Jiangdu.

His project was the first of two ambitious and grandiose extensions of the Grand Canal (the second being masterminded by Kublai Khan in the thirteenth century). Historically, this great waterway played a role in facilitating economic and cultural interflow between the north and south of China. Prior to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (770-221 B.C.), the Central Plains and the Huanghe (Yellow River) Basin were the cradle of Chinese culture. But, with the development of the canal, the focus shifted gradually under the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279)

dynasties to eastern China and the Yangtse Valley, where Chinese civilization continued to flourish, undergoing a process of sublimation and growth.

Later, as a result of the development of other means of transport, this special role inevitably dwindled. For instance, after the middle of the nineteenth century, the Grand Canal became less and less important due to the rise of maritime transport between north and south, while the railway between Tianjin and Pukou (opposite Nanjing) in Jiangsu emerged as the major north-south trunk route in east China.

Moreover, the volume of water in the Grand Canal had been diminishing. After the River Huanghe changed its course on more than one occasion, the canal in Shandong Province became so low, its bed so silted up, that navigation became wellnigh impossible. Again, for instance, of the seven sections of the Grand Canal, the second — that is the Bei (Northern) Canal between Tongxian and Tianjin — carried a very large volume of silt during the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties (1271-1911), despite repeated dredging. At the end of the Qing dynasty, no further effort was made to have it dredged. In the early 1940s, the Bei Canal was still navigable on occasion; but later, after the River Chaobai (the main part of the canal was actually formed by dredging the natural waterway at the lower reaches of the Chaobai) changed its course, the canal became more seriously silt-laden and its water was reduced to a trickle. The great waterway slowly sank into oblivion. It was only after 1949 that some parts of the canal were widened and deepened and its bends straightened, and it became once again navigable after the construction of some locks; and it was only then that the Grand Canal began to attract renewed attention.

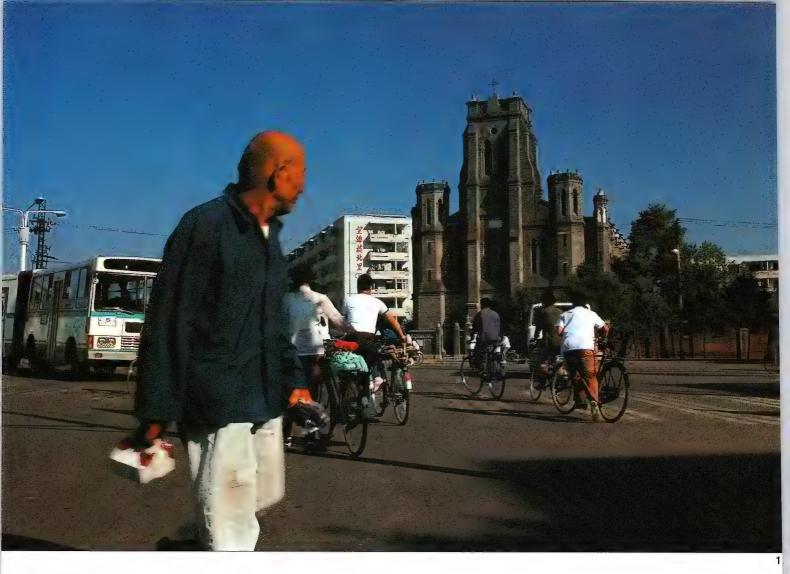
Thus we hit on the idea of travelling from north to south, by car and on foot, to see the land and people along the entire length of the Grand Canal. Our journey started in late May 1987. In this issue we intend to cover the first four sections of the canal, namely from Beijing through Hebei and Tianjin to Tai'erzhuang on the Shandong/Jiangsu border. The remaining three sections will be dealt with in the following issue.

The Northernmost Section

There used to be a spring — now dry — called Baifu (White Floating) Fountain at the northern foot of Longshan Hill near the Ming Tombs outside Beijing. This was the northernmost point of the Grand Canal. Although it is often referred to as the 'start' of the canal, in fact this was the last section to be completed, after many years of effort, on Kublai Khan's orders in 1293. It connected the capital with Tongxian and covered a distance of in all

Workers at a Cangzhou saltpan (1); Hexiwu's giant doughcake — a perennial favourite (2).





seventy-seven kilometres. The constant water problems with this section meant that its effective life did not survive the Ming dynasty.

We headed west along the old river course, now the Beijing-Miyun Diversionary Canal, and at Nankou turned back to walk through the Western Hills. Limpid water runs through the canal, which is wide and straight here. We walked in the shade of the willow trees which line the banks and, before we knew it, Beijing's famous public park, the Summer Palace, was in sight. From Lake Kunming there, the canal flows on to join the River Changhe at Zizhuyuan (Purple Bamboo Grove) in Beijing's Haidian District, then the River Gaobao outside the Xizhimen Gate, before it flows into the Shichahai inside the city proper.

Shichahai comprises three lakes — Jishuitan, Houhai and Qianhai; the beauty spot is covered with lotuses and surrounded by woods. The entire area is a popular park, where the elderly come to play chess or practise tajjiquan (shadow boxing) and the young to swim. But, during the Yuan and the early part of the Ming dynasty, until the canal became too silted, Jishuitan was a river port and the real start of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal. In those days grain barges could sail right into the heart of Beijing.

The canal continues past Xibianmen Gate

near Beijing Railway Station on its way east to Tongxian, now a satellite of the capital but the effective starting point/terminus of the Grand Canal for many centuries (see 'A Bustling Qing-Dynasty Canal Scene'). This section of the canal from Beijing to Tongxian is generally referred to as the River Tonghui.

Ancient Riverine Customs Post

Once through Tongxian, the canal heads straight east until it reaches Dongguan, where it turns southeast. The second section, the Bei Canal between Tongxian and Tianjin, covers 155 kilometres. We pressed ahead along the canal, passed Zhangjiawan — once a hub for government and private shipping between north and south —and came to Hexiwu. In the old days, all ships going south had to stop and pay customs duties here.

There is a description of Hexiwu by the Ming-dynasty writer Feng Menglong (1574-1646) in his collection of short stories entitled Xing Shi Tong Yan (Words to Awaken the Public): This is a township by the canal, about two hundred *li* from Beijing, the main communications hub between the provinces and the capital. Ships and indeed vessels of all kinds assemble there like a swarm of ants. Night and day, horses and carriages come and go in an endless stream. There are several hundred

families living there and markets all along the waterway — and what a scene of affluence!'

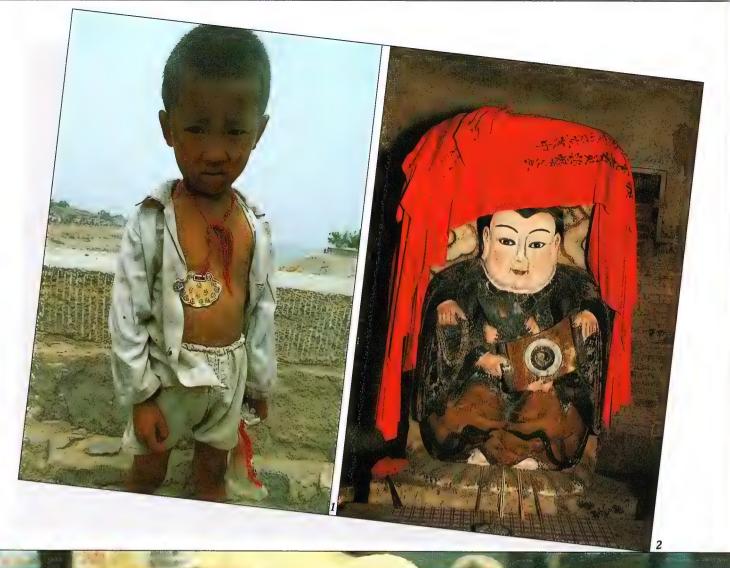
Hexiwu presents a different picture today. The canal is still there all right, except that a modern cement bridge has been built across it. The township appeared to be deserted; further on, however, we came to a row of dwellings huddled under some towering scholar trees. It was deadly quiet — all you could hear was the singing of the cicadas and, occasionally, the clucking of chickens and barking of dogs from the distance. Advancing along the earthen track we found not a single shop. The 'markets all along the water' of the old days had vanished.

I learned that the trading centre of old Hexiwu had disappeared with the decline of the canal and, after the construction of the Beijing-Tianjin Highway, a new Hexiwu had sprung up alongside the road. There are many shops there crowding the streets, all very old-fashioned as regards their fittings and decoration. The streets are filled with people and motor traffic. You would no longer hear the horses' hooves

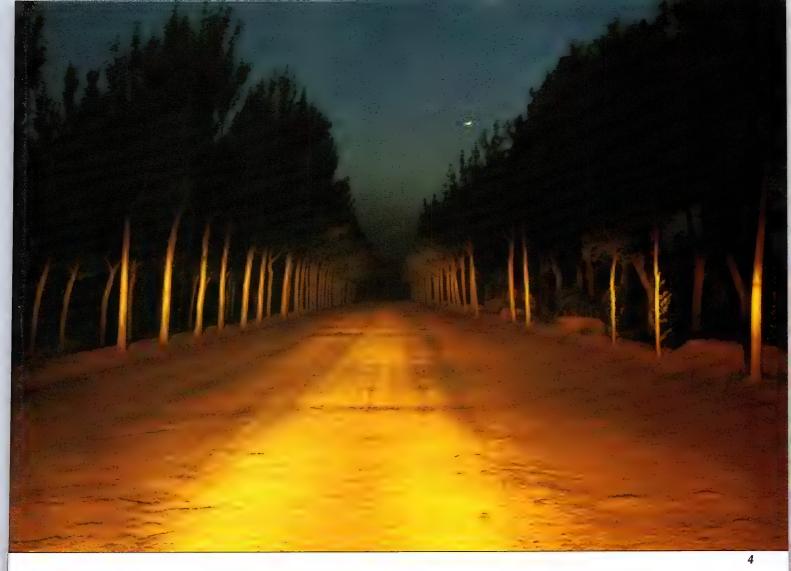
A reminder of times past: Tianjin's former cathedral (1). Aspects of life along the Nan Canal: carefree ferry-boy (2), along the canal-path (3), elaborate offerings for a wedding (4), and mourners at a funeral (5).











and the rumbling of the cart wheels of old Hexiwu, that's for sure.

As we continued, I sighted a huge tablet erected by the roadside bearing the four big characters *jin men shou yi*, meaning 'First Post of Tianjin', informing us that we were now within the municipal jurisdiction of Tianjin.

As I wandered through the streets and lanes of present-day Hexiwu, trying to recapture something of the former atmosphere, I noticed food stalls everywhere. Among the things on sale was an unusually large deep-fried doughcake which I estimated to weigh between half a kilo and a kilo. The sight of it alone made me feel hungry and I bought one to try ... not bad! This is a speciality of Hexiwu. In the days when the Grand Canal was still navigable at this point, canal workers - whose work required intense physical effort — all used to have huge appetites, hence the outsized doughcake. Today, Hexiwu's canal workers have long since disappeared, but the size of the famous doughcake has remained the same because every visitor insists on trying the genuine article.

Born from the Canal

With the taste of the doughcake still in my mouth, I left Hexiwu and continued to Tianjin along the Beijing-Tianjin Highway. Back in 608,

when the Sui emperor Yangdi opened up the northern section of the canal, one of the incidental results was the birth of Tianjin.

Ancient Tianjin (Heavenly Ford) was located at the confluence of the canal and the River Haihe. Just fifty kilometres from the Bohai Sea, it inevitably developed into a major transhipment point for grain being sent from the southern provinces to Beijing by sea. The original walls of the settlement were of rammed earth. These were replaced by brick walls in Ming times around 1493-1494, and renovated twice during the Qing dynasty. In 1725, new walls and moats were built slightly to the south of the old site. On the invasion of China by the armies of the Eight-Power Allied Forces in 1900, these walls were demolished and later replaced by four roads to the east, west, north and south.

Modern Tianjin, with nearly eight million inhabitants, is China's third largest city and a leading industrial centre. With its enormous artificial harbour, it is still a key transportation point in northern China. The most famous sight at the confluence of the canal and the River Haihe is the Catholic church known as the Wanghailou (Sea-Viewing Tower) near Shizilin Bridge on the northern bank of the river. This was one of Tianjin's missionary centres, nearby Shilin being one of the foreign trading

concessions opened in 1860. The Yi He Tuan (known to the West as the Boxers) burned the former cathedral down in 1900; the building we see today dates from 1904.

A Tenuous Flow

Beyond Tianjin is the third and longest section of the Grand Canal, the Nan (Southern) Canal, which runs through Hebei down to Linging in Shandong Province — a distance of 542 kilometres.

We travelled south along the dyke of the canal past Cangzhou, famed for its martial arts as well as for its productive saltpans, and Wuqiao, known as the 'home of Chinese acrobatics'. We found the vast open landscapes of northern China most awe-inspiring, but the canal itself became shallower and shallower until it dried up altogether. Frankly, I was disappointed. But, continuing to Dezhou in Shandong, we noticed that there was again water in the canal although — according to the locals — much less than there used to be.

Such talismans are common in Shandong (1). In the vicinity of the 'Golden Embankment' (4) there is a temple with a statue of a goddess exuding an earthy, maternal good humour (2). Demonstrating the traditional way to eat Linging's slippery beancurd (3).

Apparently, as a result of a water control project upstream, the flow is only intermittent. I was told that steamers used to ply along the canal day in, day out, in the old days, so it must once have had an abundant volume of water.

When the canal reaches Gucheng, it becomes the boundary between Hebei and Shandong. Its water flows sluggishly and there are small boats to ferry people across. We too embarked on a ferry boat. It was actually not as small as we thought, since it had enough room to carry two mini-tractors at once. It was noon and most people were having an afternoon nap, so all was quiet on the canal. The boatman was a sun-bronzed lad of fifteen or sixteen, stripped down to nothing because of the heat. There was a rope slung across the canal from shore to shore, and he just pulled the boat across to the other bank with his hands. When we produced some money to pay him, he merely waved his hand with a grin and, being a lad of few words, dived into the canal for a dip.

Of Funerals and Weddings

We continued south. Suddenly, there came the familiar sound of the *suona* (horn) and the next moment we saw a funeral procession moving across an open field.

The procession was about two hundred metres long. All the villagers must have joined

it, I told myself. At its head were suona-players blowing their instruments with a vengeance. Following them came a group of people carrying paper burial articles, all well-executed pieces of work, including paper horses and human figures. Next came a coffin carried by twelve stout men, followed by horse-drawn carts on which women and children were perched. The offspring of the dead brought up the rear, wailing, but if you took a closer look, you would find there were no tears in their eyes. The throng at the end of the procession were all gossiping and bantering as if it were a holiday parade. I was told that it is the custom of this locality for people to join processions for fun, be they for a wedding or a funeral. This must be another manifestation of the northerners' ebullient approach to life for, in the south, if people were seen smiling at a funeral, it would most probably be considered disrespectful to the dead.

The procession finally reached the graveyard, where a grave had already been dug. Amid the wailing of the bereaved, the deceased was lowered into the ground. The paper funerary objects were burned and, as the fire crackled, relatives tearfully muttered wishes for a safe journey to the netherworld. By that time the younger onlookers had begun to romp around, and the players had struck up cheerful tunes — this was, after all, northern China!

We continued on foot along the Nan Canal.

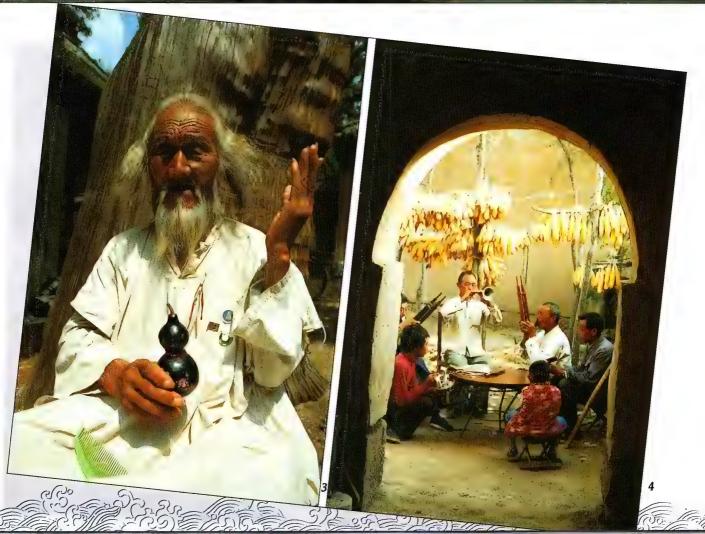
At a village further ahead we were told that there was a wedding going on. We rushed to the scene, uninvited, only to find that the ceremony was to take place the following day On the table in the bridal house we saw all kinds of wedding presents on display, among them pastries in the shape of mice, ducks and tigers. There was also a round cake looking very much like a Western-style wedding cake, as its top and sides were coated with icing. It was topped with a bird like a phoenix — a symbol of good luck for the newly-weds. The bird on the cake and all the animal pastries had dates as eyes. People in this district exchange these pastries at funerals, weddings and birthdays alike, a tradition which has been passed down since time immemorial.

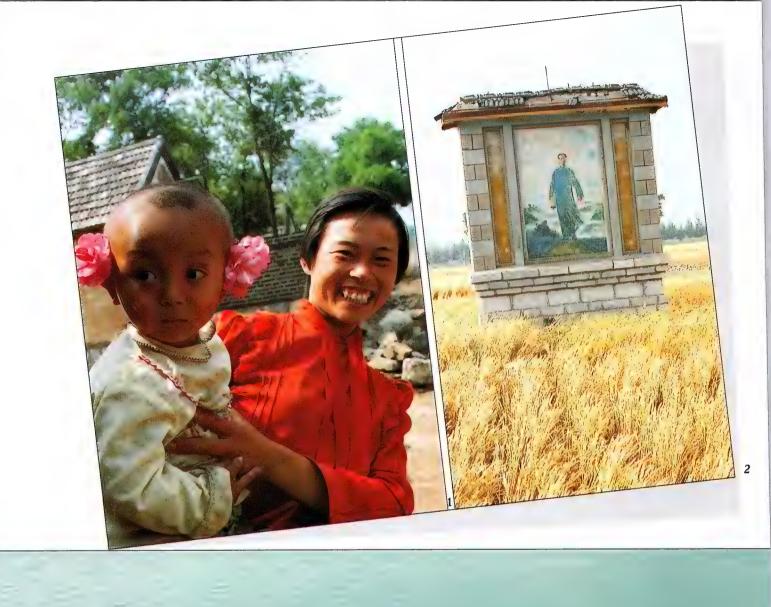
We also noticed that most local children have a plaque hanging round their neck. The plaque is inscribed with the hour and date of birth, plus characters signifying long life, wealth and status — the sort of hopes the older generation always nurtures for its children.

Stories from Outlaws of the Marsh hold viewers spellbound in Yanggu's Shizilou (1). There are no limits to what can go on a simple flatbed cart (2)! Qufu's aura of otherworldliness draws eccentrics (3). Jiaxiang householders indulge their love of woodwind music (4, by Gao Mingyi).













Bricks, Beancurd and Garlic

Linqing in Shandong is the start of the fourth section of the Grand Canal, known as the Lu Canal. Made up of the old Huitong and Jizhou Canals, part of Kublai Khan's master plan, it stretches for about 480 kilometres. Linqing was a prosperous city on the ancient canal; all the bricks and tiles used for the imperial palaces of Beijing in the old days came from here. These bricks and tiles were of top quality. But if there had been no Grand Canal along which they could be shipped to the capital, they would not have become famous, for in those days information and communications were rudimentary.

Linqing is also famous for its snacks. Virtually everyone I met there would say with a sense of pride: 'Suzhou and Hangzhou are good for sight-seeing, it's true, but Linqing here is a gourmet's paradise.' The local people are fond of good food and know how to cook it too. Many Linqing inhabitants I saw had something of a pot belly, probably a result of their indulgence in the pleasures of the table.

A great variety of these snacks are sold on the street. The most interesting is probably *jueding doufu*. This is actually a most delicate kind of beancurd, a favourite with northerners. Elsewhere in the country, beancurd is served in a bowl with a sauce made of various condiments and eaten with a spoon. But here in Linqing, it is traditionally served on a flat wooden board a few inches long; a hot peppery paste is poured over it and you have to suck it up as best you can. The beancurd is likely to escape on to your clothes or the ground unless you take great care. Thus you see customers taking up a typical pose — leaning forward with their chins stuck out, their rears extended — which gives the beancurd its name, jueding meaning 'raised bottom'!

About fifty kilometres south of Linqing is Liaocheng. I was astonished to find that it is encircled by a lake, its waters glistening. But the scenery here, even the remote high sky, all seemed to have that vast openness of the north. This lake is fed by the Grand Canal.

The next city after Liaocheng is Dong'e at the southernmost tip of the canal north of the Huanghe. From Dong'e we drove west in the direction of Yanggu. People in this part of the country love garlic. All the cyclists we came across on the way, be they men or women, old or young, without exception had the rear rack loaded with large-bulbed garlic.

We continued our westward journey by the dyke along the Huanghe, known to the local inhabitants as the 'Golden Embankment'. Stretching for over a thousand kilometres

through Henan and Shandong, it is over twenty metres high; trees of all kinds have been planted on it and it is topped by a smooth sand road. At 500-metre intervals along the embankment there are small buildings used during the flood season, where flood-prevention and rescue equipment is stored. There is also enough room inside for people to take refuge there if necessary.

As we continued on foot, we came to the Weishan Sluice Gate, where the Grand Canal joins the Huanghe.

Echoes of Outlaws of the Marsh

For Chinese people, this whole area is imbued with reminders of episodes from the popular classic *Outlaws of the Marsh*. Based on Song-dynasty tales of true happenings, this was reshaped and polished in the early Ming dynasty by Shi Nai'an (c. 1296-1370). It tells of the exploits of 108 strong, bold men and women forced for a variety of reasons to flee to the shelter of Mount Liangshan in the centre of impenetrable marshlands; they eventually (Continued on page 95)

Flower adornments for a Shandong child (1), and a chance vision in a wheatfield (2). Weishan boasts gigantic pancakes (4) and an ideal lakeside setting for kids (3).



GRAND CANAL (I)

A Bustling Qing-Dynasty Canal Scene

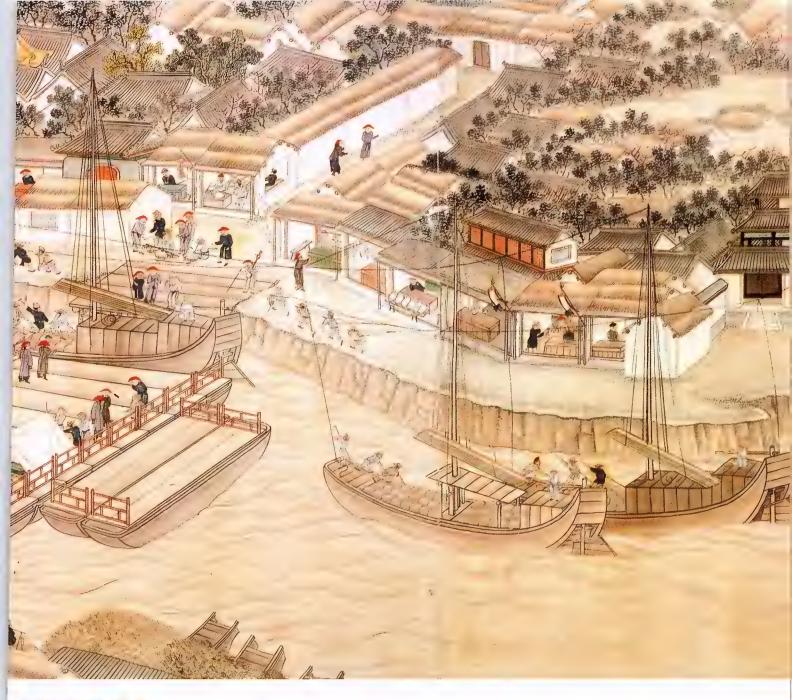
PHOTOS BY PERMISSION OF THE MUSEUM OF CHINESE HISTORY ARTICLE BY CAI FAN & TIAN CUI

In Beijing's Museum of Chinese History there is a scroll painting entitled *Transport Scene* on the River Luhe. It depicts officials overseeing grain transports to the imperial capital along the river at Tongzhou (present-day Tongxian), twenty kilometres east of Beijing proper, during the latter part of the Qing dynasty

(1644-1911). The painter is unknown but, judging from his command of the subject matter and his eye for detail, he must have lived through those times.

Formerly under the jurisdiction of Hebei Prov-

ince, Tongzhou was also called Luxian in the old days after the River Luhe (now the Baihe) which traversed the town and formed the start of the Bei (Northern) section of the Grand Canal. Even at the time of the Jin dynasty





(1115-1234)Tongzhou was already an important river port for northern China. It was also the

final transit station for grain sent to the capital from areas further south once the Tonghui Canal direct to Beijing silted up. Under the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the importance of this section of the grain route was such that wharves were constructed at intervals of nine kilometres all along it. Since taxes were paid in grain. which was then used to feed the court and pay the wages of workers and soldiers, vessels laden with rice and other goods were constant sights along the canal. In the Qing dynasty grain fleets made up of huge barges sixty metres long sometimes stretched for more than six

kilometres from head to tail. Until late in the dynasty, most of the grain sent up annually from the fertile south was stored here before being transported overland to Beijing, so this part of the canal remained extremely busy. Tongzhou was known as the 'granary capital'.

In this scroll painting the artist gives us a panoramic view of typical activities of the time

along the River Luhe. But, within the overall theme, he has cleverly arranged scenes around separate foci so that the scroll can also be appreciated section by section. Throughout the scroll, he depicts countless people no

bigger than ants, but so meticulously executed that even their facial expressions are visible; we can guess a lot about them just from their postures.

Apart from the porters carrying laden shoulder-poles, some of them fetching water from the river, and teams of burly trackers, needed to haul vessels along on long ropes when they had to travel upstream or under adverse wind conditions, the figures are mostly of officials and soldiers wearing large red hats. But there are a few women and children

> watching the progress on the wharf, and some courtesans lolling seductively in sampans moored near the waterside.

Lining the banks we see onestorey buildings used variously as granaries, rice vendors, teahouses and wineshops (advertized by the

fluttering flag-signs), where boatmen can buy food and take a break. The humbler structures have thatched roofs. There are only two doublestoreyed buildings visible on the scroll, one



half-shop, half-residence, the other a much more imposing affair with green tiles, elaborate red latticed windows, and a ceremonial arch; this is probably the *yamen* (the seat of the local magistrate).

The scroll can be divided into three parts

for easier appreciation. The first section (not reproduced here) shows us the great mounds of grain sacks piled up on the wharf, waiting either to be stored in the granaries or loaded on to carts for transport to the capital. The Qing court was very meticulous in its handling of tribute grain. Of-

ficials of ministerial rank — general granary inspectors — were appointed, one Han, the other Manchu, and stationed in Tongzhou to oversee the collection and transport of grain. These dignitaries were in charge of a host of lesser officials.

As soon as a fleet of vessels loaded with imperial grain arrived from the south at Shiba (Stone Dam) in Tongzhou, a courier would be sent galloping along the canalside. He would present an official report to the general granary inspector, informing him where the boats had

come from, the number of boats, the quantity and specification of the grain they were carrying, and so on. Then the inspectors and their subordinates, plus two officials from the Ministry of Revenue, would go to Shiba

to check and receive the grain and levy taxes on other goods. This would result in much work for their soldiery and minions. Some would have to carry the officials there in sedan-chairs, others direct the boats as they unloaded their cargo, others form a welcoming party to



greet the dignitaries.

In the centre of the scroll, the second section, the focus is

on a pontoon bridge. As this is the major river crossing at this point, many pedlars have set up their stalls along it in the hope of attracting custom. Soldiers are busily driving pedestrians and pedlars off the bridge to clear the way for the high officials. One stubborn mule is obviously refusing to budge! Two sections of the pontoon have been removed to leave a passage free for the boats. The gap is rather narrow, so that only one boat can pass at a time, but this makes it much more convenient for the officials who can be sure that no boat slips through without being boarded and inspected. This pro-



cess obviously takes quite some time; there is a queue of vessels strung out along the river and backed up out of sight. Only when all the formalities are complete can boats unload their cargo.

All the vessels have their sails lowered, and they will have to be towed through the narrow passage one by one by a gang of trackers. These were seasonal workers. Every year when the river thawed in the third month by the lunar

calendar, boat trackers and porters swarmed to the wharfs at Tongzhou to earn a meagre living. When the river froze up again



in the tenth lunar month, they would leave to

try their luck elsewhere. Then Tongzhou would be relatively quiet for several months until the annual cycle began all over again.

The final section of the scroll depicts a convoy of boats sailing along the canal (probably to the rhythmic sound of gongs). The small vessel at the head, presumably the pilot boat, holds two imposingly attired

warriors grasping broadswords. Right behind comes an official boat. Soldiers holding aloft an ornate canopy and tall feather fans (insignia of power in ancient China) indicate the approach of high dignitaries. At the centre of the convoy is a gaily decorated two-decked vessel. The rooms on the lower deck form the sleeping and living areas. The upper deck is reserved for practical nautical jobs such as hoisting

and lowering the sails, steering and casting anchor. A man stands at the bow, his hands at his sides; judging by his dress and his air of author-

ity, this must be one of the general granary inspectors or someone of equally exalted rank. A few barges bring up the rear. The river at this point appears to be empty of other shipping, but we can see many masts clustered by the riverside. Obviously, other craft have pulled in and tied

up until the official party has passed.

In our days, grain is no longer transported to Beijing along the canal system; the railways took over this role in the late nineteenth century. But this unknown artist has ensured that the bustling scene of times gone by will remain for ever alive in our mind's eye.

Translated by Wang Mingjie



GRAND CANAL (I)

Stories Behind the Relics (I)

PHOTOS BY BAO KUN, DENG LILI, YU ZHIXIN & ZHANG HAIBO ILLUSTRATED BY DING WEISHENG ARTICLE BY SHEN XINGDA

ew historical relics remain to be seen along the Grand Canal, particularly in its northern reaches. Yet these few can often give us clearer insight into the events of the past or tell us some fascinating story or legend about people of times gone by.





Haiyuncang, Dongmencang and Lumicang. The walls of the buildings which flank the hutongs are very high, having been built as granaries, and some of them are four hundred years old.

Once the last section of the Grand Canal, the River Tonghui, was opened up for navigation during the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), facilitating shipment to Dadu, more and more grain was sent up from the rice-growing south. In Yuan times, the annual figure for foodgrains shipped through the Grand Canal was about three million shi (an ancient unit for measuring cereals, equivalent to one hectolitre). Even though the River Tonghui was only operable for a short period, this figure rose to four million shi during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing

(1644-1911) dynasties. In order to conserve these huge quantities, successive imperial courts ordered the construction of ever more warehouses and granaries at the point nearest Tongxian, the effective terminus of the canal throughout most of the period.

Today, most of the old warehouses have been demolished for new housing; the only one left is in the Dongmencang — literally,

The Spring in the Hills

As mentioned in an earlier article, the northernmost point of the Grand Canal is at Baifu Fountain at the foot of Longshan Hill in Changping County, thirty-five kilometres north of Beijing. The stone surround at the fountain (1) has nine dragon heads sculpted on it, from each of whose wide-open mouths a stream of water once gushed. Merging into one, these streams wound their way down towards Beijing to ensure an adequate water supply for the River Tonghui, the Beijing-Tongxian section of the Grand Canal.

It is fairly easy to find the site of the Baifu

Fountain today, six to seven hundred years after its discovery. But the original finding of the water source involved lengthy exploration and much hard effort.

During the reign of Kublai Khan (1215-1294), founder of the Yuan dynasty, Guo Shoujing — an expert in hydraulic engineering — was ordered to renovate the existing Grand Canal and open it up further towards the capital, Dadu (Beijing), so that shipments could be sent direct, eliminating the need to cart them from Tongxian. Guo spent years surveying the hydrological situation and exploring the lie of the land around Dadu, situated in a fairly arid plain, but it was thirty-five years before he managed to work out the solution — the series of small springs which were brought together

at the Baifu Fountain. Sad to say, his work of half a lifetime did not bear lasting fruit: this section had become inoperable by the early years of the Ming dynasty.

Warehouses with a Past

A lot of the *hutongs* (alleys) to the north of Beijing Railway Station in the eastern part of the city incorporate the character *cang* (warehouse) in their names; for example,







'warehouse at the East Gate'. Occupying an area

of more than 10.000 square metres, this is a

complex of twenty-nine austere buildings (2).

At the foot of the side wall of one of the

storehouses there is a large brick inscribed with

characters reading: 'Made in the twenty-eighth

year of the reign of ...jing'. If one inserts the

missing character, which is thought to be jia,

this dates the warehouse to the times of the

Ming emperor Shizong, as his reign title was Jiajing. We can interpret the year in question as 1549 on the Western calendar.

Site of the Opium War's Last Battle

Baliqiao (Eight-Li Bridge) was constructed earlier in the Ming dynasty, in 1446. This famous stone bridge (3), sixty metres long and fifteen metres wide, located east of Beijing, was once an important 'pass' along the land route between Beijing and Tongxian or Tianjin — everybody had to cross it. The bridge was about eight li (four kilometres) from the county town of Tongxian, hence its name.

This was the scene of the last battle of the Second Opium War in September 1860. As the



Anglo-French forces were making their way from Tianjin along the Grand Canal towards Beijing, they ran into a fierce attack by Qing troops as they attempted to pass Baliqiao and were forced to retreat to Tongxian. Two weeks later, having re-mustered their strength, the allied forces made another attempt, attacking the Qing army stationed at the bridge. This time the Qing troops suffered an ignominious defeat under General Senggelinqin, a Mongol prince. Baliqiao fell into the hands of the foreign troops who continued unhindered to Beijing, where they carried out their notorious sack of the Yuanmingyuan (Old Summer Palace) and the Summer Palace itself.

Historical Wharves

As early as the Jin dynasty (1115-1234), Tongxian (formerly Tongzhou) was already a major hub in the north for grain transport along the waterways. This is what gives the place its name, since *tong* means 'free passage'. Tongxian, as we have seen in other articles, was the head of the busy Bei Canal to Tianjin.

Dai Chengyuan, a Tongxian resident who is now over a hundred years old, once worked on the wharf. He recalls his younger days: at the age of sixteen he started driving carts loaded with tribute grain from the wharf at Tongxian to the warehouses inside the Chaoyangmen Gate in eastern Beijing, which was the commercial centre then. Life was hard. As the canal was always busy, regardless of the weather Dai hac to get up before dawn every day and start work while it was still dark:

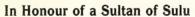
During the canal's heyday, a convoy of barges might stretch six kilometres from heac to tail. Zhangjiawan, a riverine anchorage just east of Tongxian at the junction of the Bei Canal and the River Yongding, became an important transit point for goods en route to Dadu during the Yuan dynasty. In addition, during this and successive dynasties, it was the custom for merchants, travellers, government officials and candidates for the imperial examinations going to the capital by boat to disembark at





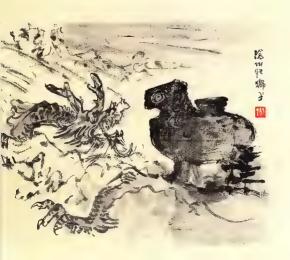


dates 955-959) of the Later Zhou to commemorate the victory of his forces over non-Han tribes from the north at a place called Fengqiaoguan (now Xiongxian in Hebei).



Dezhou is the first important town along the Grand Canal once you cross from Hebei into Shandong Province. According to the records, after the Huitong Canal (the northern section of the Lu Canal, excavated in Yuan times) was dredged and widened between 1403 and 1424 and re-opened to shipping, Dezhou came into its own. This was a major junction of water and land transport between north and south and an important strategic point. And among those passing through were some illustrious names.

In 1417, Paduka Pahala, the Sultan of Sulu—an island in the Pacific Ocean, now part of the Philippines—accompanied by a vast retinue and family members totalling more than three hundred persons, arrived in China after a two-month voyage by sea. Making his way to the capital, the sultan stayed there for twenty-seven days, presenting the Ming emperor Chengzu with pearls, precious stones and hawksbill turtles and receiving in return



Zhangjiawan and switch to horse-drawn carriages for the remaining thirty kilometres. And usually, when people made the reverse journey, leaving the capital to travel to points further south, their relatives and friends would accompany them as far as Zhangjiawan to give them a rousing send-off.

Zhangjiawan shows precious little trace of its prosperous past nowadays. Apart from the canal itself, all that is visible is what remains of the old wharf in the southeastern corner of the present settlement. The Grand Canal (4) is now a clear, shallow stream which winds its way under a small bridge and off into the distance.

The Iron Lion of Cangzhou

South of Tianjin, the Grand Canal re-enters Hebei and flows through Cangzhou. The most famous monument in this county is almost certainly the iron lion which stands proud on the shores of the Bohai Sea in the village of Dongguan, twenty kilometres southeast of Cangzhou. This gigantic statue (5), six metres long, 5.48 metres high and weighing around thirty tons, was cast in 953 during the Later Zhou in the Five Dynasties (907-960).

How did it get there and what was the purpose of the statue? We have only legends to go on. According to one well-known tale, in ancient times the area of Cangzhou was plagued by a

series of disastrous floods, causing much loss of life and damage to property. The local people, believing this to be due to the evil doings of a fierce and malevolent dragon-king which lived in the Bohai Sea, erected this iron statue. Traditionally, iron symbolized strength and righteousness and was thought to protect against flooding; iron figures were often sunk in rivers and set by lakes and dams to control the waters and subdue the dragons which dwelt in them. And, of course, lions were popular quardian figures.

Another legend has it that the lion was erected in the reign of Emperor Shizong (reign

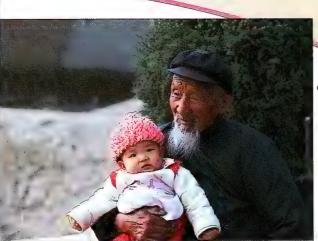


Photo by Liu Pit Mui





gold, silver, brocade and tea. He commenced his lengthy return journey with a descent of the Grand Canal. But, as they were passing through Dezhou, the sultan fell ill and died.

When the emperor heard the news, he immediately dispatched one of his ministers to ensure that the ruler of Sulu was buried in a manner befitting his rank. A resting place was chosen and a mausoleum built. The emperor also had a funerary stele erected over the tomb

in accordance with Ming rites. Paduka Pahala's concubine, his second and third sons and some of their attendants were allowed to stay in Dezhou and look after the tomb. During the Qing dynasty in 1731, the descendants of these people adopted Chinese nationality and took the first character of the phonetic transcription of their ancestor's name as their own family name in Chinese.

The sultan's tomb can be found in the village of Beiying about one kilometre from Dezhou's North Gate. Most of the present-day villagers are said to be descended from the original tomb attendants. They even claim that one of the village's youngest inhabitants (6) is a sixteenth-generation blood descendant of the Sultan of Sulu himself!



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Symbol of the Brick Industry

The famous pagoda (7) which rises on the east bank of the Grand Canal at Linqing is unusual in that the octagonal nine-storeyed structure is made of brick. This can perhaps be seen as a symbol of the dominant industry of Linqing in former days. It is said that, during the Ming dynasty, brick kilns stretched some



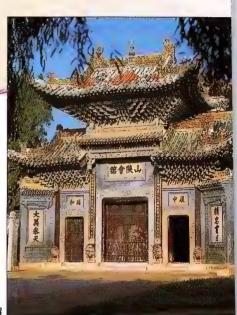
twenty kilometres along the Grand Canal at this point. The city's output of grey bricks was considered so important that special court officials were sent from Beijing to supervise the making of the bricks. Linqing bricks were prized because of their superb quality and their extreme durability; they were soaked in *tung* oil for several months after being fired and were supposed to be resistant to corrosion. Buildings made of such bricks lasted for hundreds of years, so they were especially sought after for the imperial palaces, tombs and temples.

On the basis of its bricks and tiles and its geographical location, Linqing developed into one of the ten biggest cities along the Grand Canal, and remained a major industrial centre until the end of the nineteenth century when

the canal had to be closed to shipping. As its sixty-metre-high pagoda was erected on a stretch of flat land near the junction of the old Huitong and Nan Canals, it acted as a landmark for vessels sailing along the canal, being visible long before they reached Linqing.

Mercantile Cooperation

After the dredging and widening of the canal during the Yuan dynasty, Liaocheng — further south — became the economic centre





Ming-Dynasty Engineering

One of the most important hydraulic engineering projects along the Grand Canal is the Ming-dynasty Daicun Dam (10) located around thirty kilometres east of Dongping.

In 1391, the Huitong Canal was blocked by silt and mud overflowing from the Huanghe. In 1411, the people having called repeatedly for the re-opening of this section of the canal, the imperial court instructed the Minister for Public Works to build a dam on the River Dawen. The natural flow of this river was from east to northwest, but the dam forced the river to change its course southwest towards the man-made Xiaowen Canal, with the result that the combined waters entered the Huitong Canal below Nanwang, site of the Nanwang Bifurcation Gate. This project was very successful in solving the water level problems along the Huitong Canal,

and this section was then navigable until towards the end of the Qing dynasty.

As we saw with Cangzhou's lion, mythical beasts were often placed beside the banks or sunk under water to protect against flooding.



for the western part of the Shandong Plain. Between 1736 and 1795 in the Qing dynasty, a large number of the merchants who settled in Liaocheng were from Shanxi and Shaanxi. As the customs and traditions of these two northern provinces were (and are) very similar, the merchants clubbed together to build a hall for use as a lodging house and for communal purposes.

Thus in 1743 the so-called Shan-Shaan Hall (8) was built in the Dongguan area of Liaocheng on the western bank of the canal. The complex has magnificent wooden roofs of complicated structure. Not far away there is a dilapidated

wharf which is said to be where the Qing emperor Qianlong once landed as he was making his way south on an inspection tour.

Water for a Traditional Tonic

Dong'e County, situated east of the Grand Canal just north of the Huanghe (Yellow River), is renowned for its *e'jiao*. Traditional ingredients such as donkey hide, soybean oil, Shaoxing rice wine and crystal sugar go into the making of this fortifying tonic, which is claimed to be particularly beneficial for the elderly and for women after childbirth. It was once included in the annual tribute sent to the imperial court and was prized for its high degree of purity. This in turn was attributed to the fine local well water.

Dong'e's oldest well, Gu'e Well (9), is situated thirty kilometres southwest of the county seat. A local legend relates that once, hearing of the collapse of the old well, Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty, who had earlier recovered his health after taking e'jiao, was so anxious that he sent one of his officials to supervise its renovation. The well is only a few kilometres away from the Grand Canal. In the past, usually after the Mid-Autumn Festival, which falls around September in the Western calendar, merchants would sail up the canal from Jiangsu and Zhejiang to commission e'jiao from the people of Dong'e.







Residence of an Emperor

As one continues through into Jiangsu Province, there is an old imperial residence (11) in the town of Zaohe northwest of Suqian, near Lake Luoma. It occupies 2.2 hectares of land and consists of fourteen buildings of traditional design. This was where Emperor Qianlong (reign dates 1735-1796) used to stay when he made his inspection tours to the south.

It is said that, on one occasion when Emperor Qianlong was passing through the town, he took a walk in disguise as was his wont and came across the old Longwang (Dragon King) Temple, where people used to go and pray for rain in times of drought or mercy in times of flood. The emperor saw a great multitude of people gathered there and, out of curiosity, asked one of the spectators what was going on. The man replied that they were celebrating an old monk's birthday. After a second's thought, Qianlong composed a couplet and had it forwarded to the venerable monk as a birthday offering; then he hurried away. After much speculation, the local people guessed that the unknown calligrapher had been none other than their emperor.

Translated by Kitty Leung



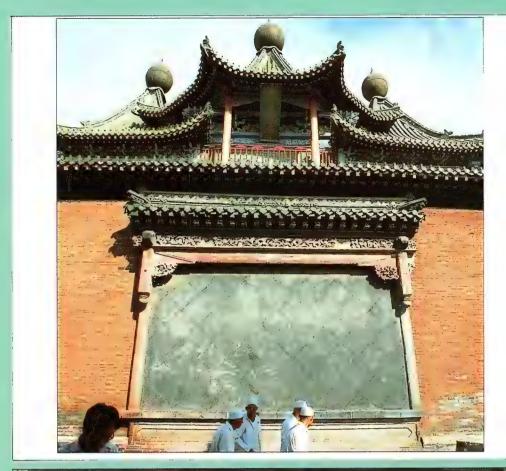


GRAND CANAL (I)

Historic Traces of Islam

PHOTOS BY BAO KUN, DENG LILI, YU ZHIXIN & ZHANG HAIBO ARTICLE BY BAO KUN







Before the days of railways and a craft, merchants and travelle had to make their way along carav routes or cross oceans and navigarivers to reach their destination. The were also inevitably the routes by whi foreign cultural and religious influence entered countries.

China was no exception, as we c see from the example of the Grai Canal. Initially, foreigners tended to co gregate at points of easy access which were convenient for trading and cor munications purposes. But over tin they grew bolder and gained the co fidence and knowledge to branch ou Thus we find mosques in many town along the banks of the Grand Cana witness to the Moslem presence in the: parts. The architecture of thes mosques, although differing widely froi place to place, is in general high sinicized, demonstrating the advance stage of assimilation.

Travelling from Cangzhou in Hebi southwest into Shandong, I stopped o to explore several of these fascinatin monuments to social history.

How Islam Reached Cangzhou

In Cangzhou, the largest religiou centre for the Moslem community is th Nanda Mosque. This is built in a trad tional Chinese style with upturned eaves its roof covered with glazed green tiles. The immense prayer hall holds over on thousand worshippers. The floor i covered with straw mats on which the faithful kneel to pray or sit to recite the Koran.

The elderly imam in charge of the mosque, a most welcoming gentleman speaks fluent Arabic. I asked him whether it was true that the Moslems of Cangzhou were descended from Arabs. He smiled and told me that their ancestors had reached the coast of China and then sailed up the River Yangtse as far as Yangzhou, from where they eventually penetrated into northern China via the Grand Canal. When I asked him if there was any proof of this, he laughed: 'Proof? When I preach the Koran, I speak



vrabic with a pronounced Jiangsu/

'hejiang accent!'

Islam did in fact make its way into China very soon after it was founded. Acording to historical records, in August i51, during the reign of Emperor Gaozong of the Tang dynasty (618-907), envoys arrived in the contemporary apital Chang'an from Tazi (a phonetic ransliteration of a Persian word meanng 'Ancient Arabia'). They gave the emperor a report of the general situation n Tazi and an outline of the Islamic docrines laid down by the prophet Mohammed (c. 570-632). Historians therefore consider 651 the official date of the introduction of Islam into China.

Many Moslems entered China along the trading routes known as the Silk Road via Central Asia, where Islam gained ground as Buddhism declined. Simultaneously, Arab and Persian merchants and seafarers from the areas around the Persian Gulf began to flock to Chinese ports such as Guangzhou in Guangdong and Quanzhou in Fujian. The latter was a major seaport during the Tang dynasty, the start of the socalled 'Silk Road of the Sea', and it still contains many relics of the strong Moslem presence there, including what is said to be China's oldest mosque, built in 1009. Some merchants eventually decided to settle permanently in China and moved inland. Thus the city of Yangzhou, close to the junction of the Grand Canal and the Yangtse, had Arab residents from early Tang times. The city also boasts the tomb of Puhaddin, a sixteenth-generation descendant of the prophet who came to preach the faith but died in Yangzhou in 1275.

The Mongols who founded the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) played a significant role in the spread of Islam. Persian and

The venerable imam (2) of Nanda Mosque, which displays many sinicized architectural elements (1); a pastry-vendor displays her goodies at the mosque entrance (3). The mosque at Botou (4), built with materials for a palace.





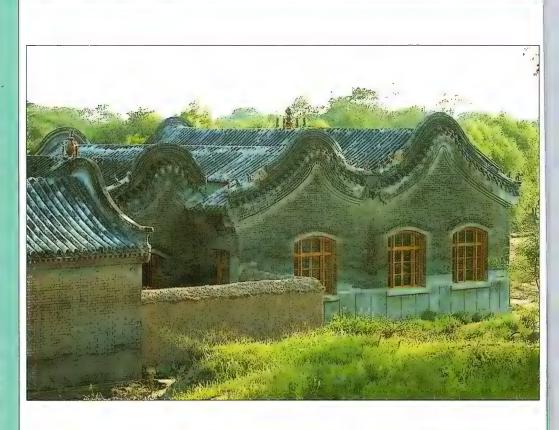
Arab culture was introduced on a large scale. Arab astronomers and mathematicians, as well as other scientists and artisans, were installed at court. A department of Arab medicine and two pharmacology academies were also established under the patronage of Kublai Khan. But the population movements caused by the settlement in China of Moslem mercenaries employed elsewhere by the Mongol rulers had an even longer-lasting influence. These people, then called 'Huihui,' are said to have formed the basis for the present-day Hui (Moslem) communities in Ningxia and Yunnan.

Diversity of Styles

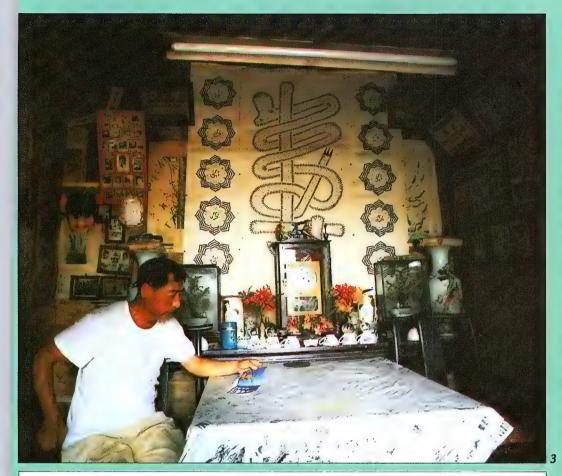
Botou, not far south of Cangzhou, also has an old Moslem quarter centred around a magnificent mosque which seems more like a palace. There is a fascinating tale behind this architectural masterpiece.

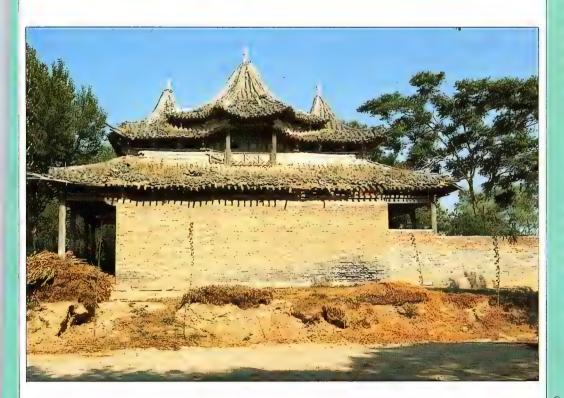
The story goes that, towards the end of the Ming dynasty, during the reign of Emperor Chongzhen (1628-1644), the order went out to ship the finest timber from south of the Yangtse and bricks and tiles from Shandong to renovate the imperial palace in Beijing. Fate however decided otherwise. Although it embarked on the long voyage north up the Grand Canal, the imperial fleet never reached Beijing for, in the meantime, a rebel army headed by Li Zicheng — intent on overthrowing the dynasty — had attacked the capital and captured it.

At the time of the calamity, the fleet had progressed as far as Botou. On hearing the news, the eunuch in command fled for his life, abandoning all the costly building materials. Soon afterwards, General Wu Sangui, the Ming commander at Shanhaiguan, the eastern end of the Great Wall, called on the Manchu forces to help restore order; Li Zicheng was killed in 1645, but the Manchus stayed in Beijing and founded the Qing dynasty. The Moslems of Botou took advantage of all this confusion in high places to build their mosque with the materials meant for a palace. Whether









the story is true or not hardly matters: the mosque has a most noble and imposing appearance.

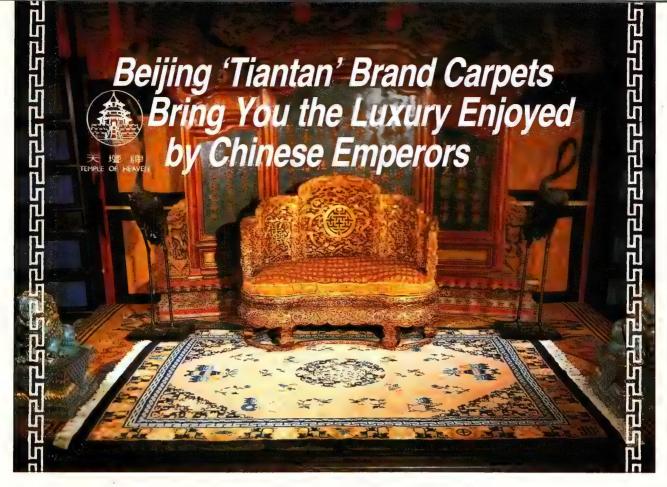
By way of contrast, near Sinüsi, south of Dezhou in Shandong, there is a mosque that looks like an ordinary residence. Built of grey bricks and tiles, the mosque has large wave-like 'ears' on the gables and carved eave-tiles. The courtyard is full of flowers, their sweet scent perfuming the air.

The mosque was empty but, after a brief look round, on emerging into the street, I met an old man herding his sheep. He told me that I was in the village of Wangjia and that all the villagers were Moslems related to the residents of Niujie (Ox Street) in Beijing. This famous street in the Xuanwumen District is the centre of the capital's Moslem community; its mosque is Beijing's oldest and largest, and all the shops and restaurants in the vicinity are run by Huis and members of other Moslem minorities. I noticed that the old shepherd had a strong Beijing accent. He told me that he was born in Wangjia, but had gone to the capital by boat along the Grand Canal when he was twelve to be instructed by a relative in the art of cooking. Now, having reached retirement age, he had left the city to return to his home so that he could spend his remaining years in the tranquillity of rural surroundings.

Some Full, Some Deserted

Linging is another town which prospered as a result of its location on the Grand Canal. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, when grain transports to the capital were at their peak, it is said that 200,000 tons of grain passed through the town every year. Tea, sugar, sesame, cotton and silk were also collected there before being sent north. During those (Continued on page 93)

Differing styles: a mosque like a village house in Wangjia (1); the 'lost' mosque of Zhangqiu (4). The women of Linging have their own prayer room (2); inside a Hui home (3).



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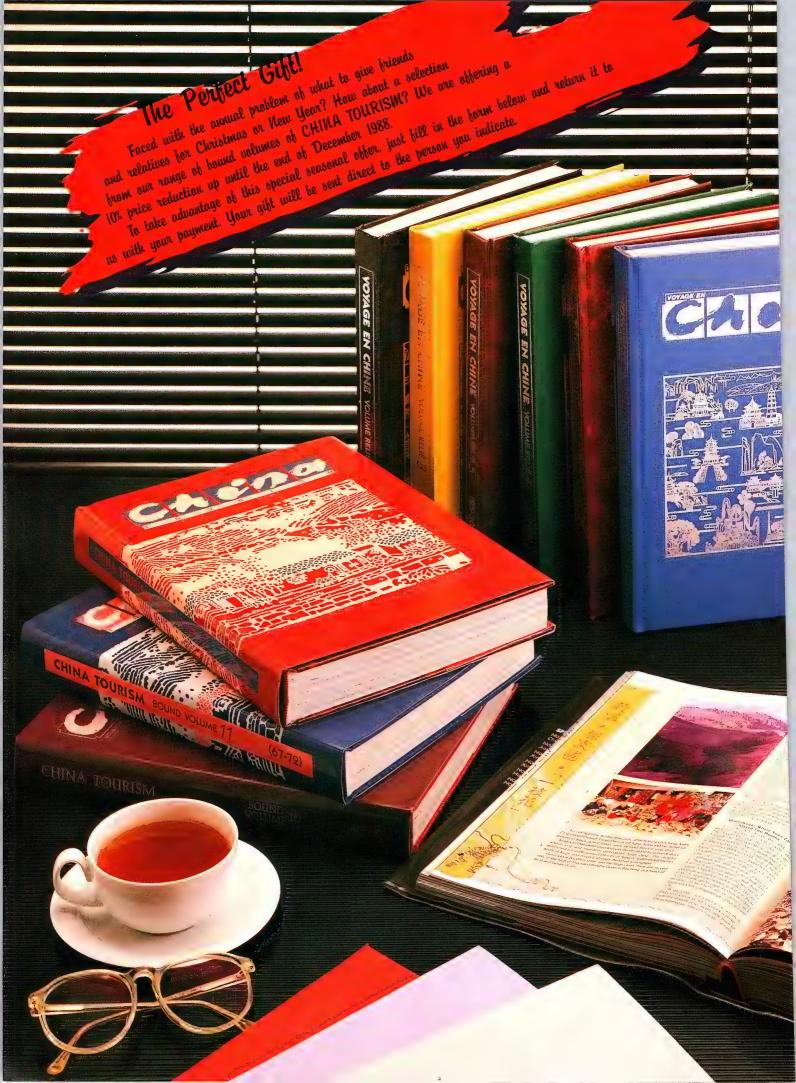
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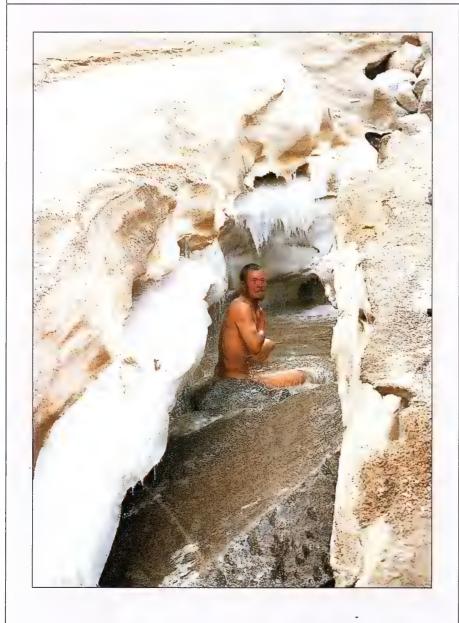
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Into the Glaciers of the Qilian Mountains

PHOTOS BY YUN FENG & ZUO YI ARTICLE BY KANG JIE

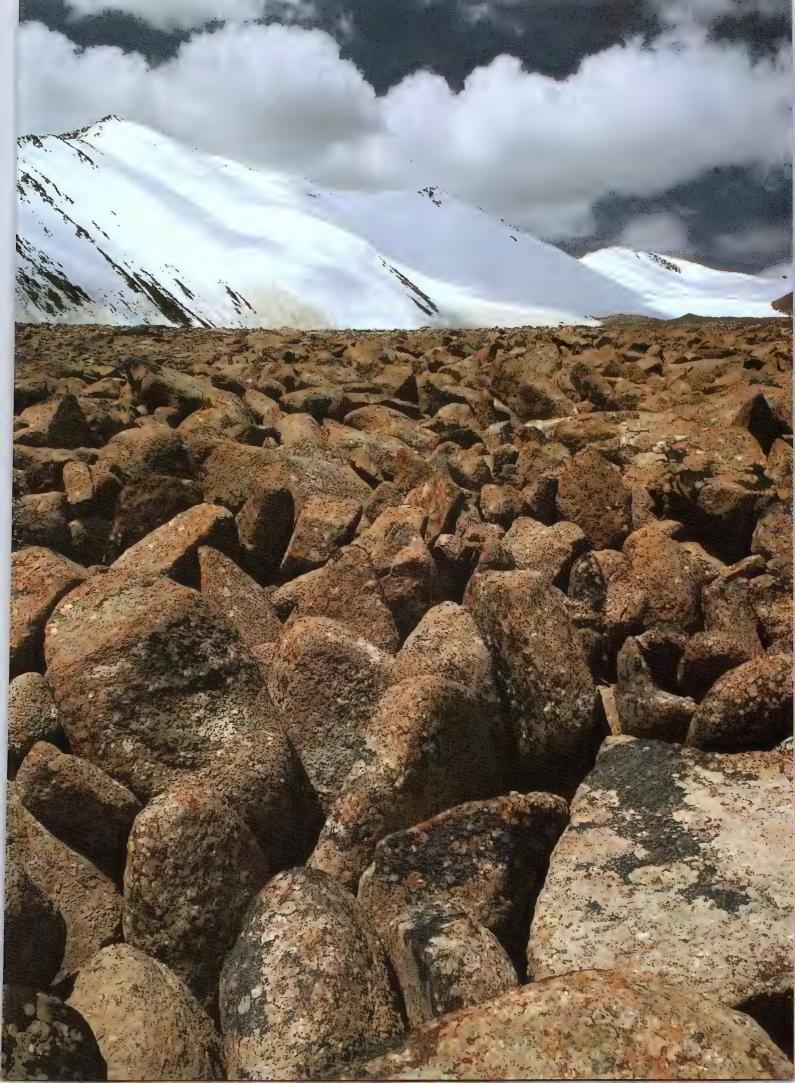


enturing by camel into a glacier zone four thousand metres above sea-level, I came across the unexpected apparition of a naked man bathing in an icy stream. When he turned round and saw my astonished face, he grimaced as if to say, 'I'm used to it'. From his burly body and strong muscles, it certainly seemed that this spartan treatment was doing him no harm.

I was in the Qilian Mountains which mark the boundary between Gansu and Qinghai for one thousand kilometres, curving from the Dangjin Pass east of the Altun Range as far as Mount Wushao in Gansu. Narrowing from west to east, with many subsidiary spurs and ridges running off south towards Qinghai's Qaidam Basin, this range forms the southern rim of the Gansu Corridor, through which the Silk Road once led to the West. Covering an area of 100,000 square kilometres, it rises to an average height of four thousand metres; the highest peak, Mount Qilian, 5,500 metres above sea-level, sits astride the Gansu/Qinghai border due south of Jiuquan.

In all, this great mountain mass gives birth to 3,306 glaciers with a surface area of around two thousand square kilometres. The creeping 'rivers' formed by the accumulation of snow and its transformation into ice are found in the highest parts of the range, at altitudes above 4,500 metres. Some of the glaciers are centred in basins or *cirques* just below the peaks, some are hanging glaciers, while others coil down through the high valleys, glittering in the sun like crystal.

This is indeed an icy but beautifully wrought world, shot through with tints of blue and green. The glacier surfaces exposed to the smoothing effects of the winds are burnished as bright as mirrors. With the perpetually snow-clad peaks stretching into the distance all around, the glaciers make their slow way down the mountain, leaving behind great heaps of detritus and depositing enormous boulders on the valley floor. The body of each glacier is twisted and tortured into weird shapes by differences in its flow rate and pressure, breaking open into clefts and crevasses, rising up into séracs — pillars of ice — which conjure up images of graceful ladies-in-waiting or







lurking ogres. At one point you might be put in mind of pagodas, while elsewhere the ice may be 'draped' so fantastically it resembles curtains. Many gigantic icicles hang there, melting quickly under the rays of the sun, freezing as the temperature drops.

Further down in the valley, tens of thousands of rivulets wind their way around the contours of the slopes like so many white silk scarves, their clear icy waters splashing merrily against the rocks. Dozens of rivers, big and small, rise in the Qilian Mountains as the result of melting snow and ice, watering the pastures and fields below, as well as the Gansu Corridor.

Below the Snowline

It was August at the time of my visit, the finest period of the year, although the weather remained fairly cold. At the foot of the mountains we passed roadbuilders sleeping under padded quilts, and they found it necessary to light a fire in the early morning to get warm. Further up, it was of course much chillier.

The snowy peaks silhouetted against the sky looked like silvery pyramids, but below the snowline ancient pines and dragon spruces grew in profusion, their branches swaying in the strong wind like a rolling green sea. In the forest and among the boulders of the moraine there were still azaleas in bloom as well as the snow lotus (Saussurea involucrata), while other flowers carpeted the ground with colour.

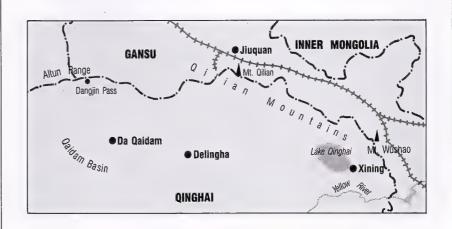
Bumping about on our camels, we passed through wisps of cloud and mist coiling among the trees. Suddenly a snow pheasant flew up, making into the depths of the forest. Herds of Mongolian gazelles, red deer and wild horses came into sight, moving at a considerable speed.

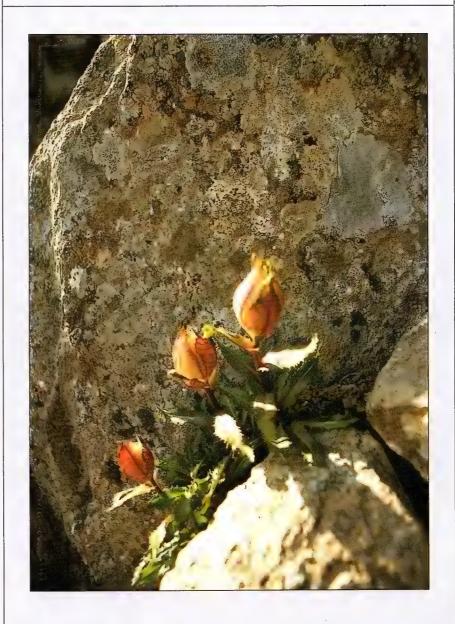
At altitudes of over four thousand metres you are also likely to come-across wild yak, as neither the lack of oxygen, the fierce winds nor the extreme cold (-20 to -30°C) constitute any threat to them with their thick coats. When the water freezes over, they just eat the snow and dig down with their hooves to reach the hidden grasses and moss below. These animals are much larger than their domesticated counterparts; the biggest wild yak bull recorded measured two and a half metres long, stood two metres tall, and weighed in at five hundred kilos. Yak bulls are ferocious, with a reputation for standing their ground to the death. Today, these animals are rare in the wild and protected by the state.

These are the images that linger when I think of the Qilian Mountains ... the sturdy yak and the tenacious and beautiful snow lotus.

Translated by Wu Ling

The southwestern rim of the Qilian Mountains is, comparatively speaking, the easiest point of access. The author of this article travelled for one and a half days by long-distance bus from Xining, capital of Qinghai, to Da Qaldam (past Lake Qinghai and Delingha), although there is also a train connection. At Da Qaldam camels, yaks and guides are available for treks into the nearby glacier region.







Light and Shadow — The Shaanxi Shadow Play

PHOTOS BY WEI WANGXIANG ARTICLE BY GAO XUEMIN & FAN MAOZHEN



t is said that the origin of the Chinese shadow play can be dated back to the Qin dynasty (221-207 B.C.) and that it was connected with the ancient Chinese custom of evoking the spirits of the dead. One famous example quoted occurred during the reign of Emperor Wudi of the Western Han (206 B.C. - A.D. 8), when the emperor invited a professional spiritualist to call up the spirit of one of his dead favourites. Standing in front of a curtain, the emperor was ecstatic at seeing the silhouette of his beloved concubine appear on the screen. The 'concubine' was in fact a cartoon made from movable pieces of thin leather and painted; it was manipulated by a person standing behind the curtain, which was back-lit by candles. Earlier that dynasty, during the time of Emperor Wendi, court maids are said to have cut leaves into human shapes and made use of the moonlight shining on to the silk hanging over the window to perform what may well have been the first ever shadow play in order to entertain one of the young imperial princes.

Historians generally agree that the Chinese shadow play originated in Shaanxi in Chang'an (present-day Xi'an), the capital of more than ten dynasties including the Western Han, Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907). During the latter two periods Chang'an was a cosmopolitan metropolis where the arts flourished: singing and opera became equally popular at court and among the common people. And what more convenient way to stage opera than in miniature as a shadow play?

The puppets were originally cut from paper or card, but sheep, donkey, buffalo and ox hide was used from the Song dynasty (960-1279) onwards. Shaanxi puppets like the ones shown here are currently made from ox hide following time-honoured techniques. The leather is rubbed until it is so thin it becomes translucent, then it is pressed, carved and painted. For greater flexibility of movement, the craftsman makes each part of the puppet separately and then joins them all together with twine. Bamboo sticks are attached to the movable parts for manipulation; there are usually three sticks per puppet. For greater versatility, the heads of the puppets can be interchanged to fit different bodies. Real human hair is used for the beards, and feathers and so on adorn the head-dresses.

Influence of Many Art Forms

This Shaanxi folk art can be divided on a geographical basis into two schools, eastern and western. The eastern school covers shadow plays performed in Weinan District east of Xi'an; the western school, those performed in the area west of Xianyang. There are noticeable differences between the two schools. In the eastern area, most of the puppets are modelled with protruding





Behind the scenes (2). A mythological hero, Nezha, creates an uproar in the Dragon King's palace below the sea (1); more dragons chase a fire ball (3); the 'Flaming Mountain' episode from Journey to the West (4).









preheads and are small and graceful. In the vestern school, the puppets are generally modelled nore crudely, with straight noses and high preheads; they also tend to be larger than the puppets of the other school. However, generally speaking, both Shaanxi shadow-play schools display similar characteristics since they are based on the same artistic tradition.

Take the animal figures used in shadow plays, or instance. The flying horses, winged tigers and tragons which soar, writhe and pounce across the screen are spirited beasts, giving the audience a sense of untamed energy and life reminiscent of lan-dynasty bas-relief carvings. The fluidity of the ines of the puppets is similar to the approach of mural paintings of the Tang and academy paintings of the Song dynasties. Furthermore, the colours are clear and rich like those used in Shaanxi embroidery, while the cut-out technique employed reminds us of paper-cutting, for which the women of Shaanxi are famous.

There is also a very obvious influence from Shaanxi opera, qinqiang, as regards make-up, costuming and subject-matter. This comes through especially clearly in connection with the jing (painted face) roles — male characters of strong personality such as kings, warriors and demons.

One of the unique features of Shaanxi shadow puppets is the exquisite balance between light and shadow. Obviously, if there are too many hollowed-out spaces on the puppets, this will increase the difficulty of production and also make them more fragile. On the other hand, if the puppet is just solid leather, it will appear as a dark shape. Shaanxi puppet-makers use the hollowed-out spaces as colour boundaries, each gap marking a change of colour on the leather puppet. This technique greatly increases the dramatic and artistic effect of the figures.

Character Differentiation

Since the shadow puppets are the 'actors' used to play out the storyline, to help the audience understand what is going on the puppets' features are deliberately exaggerated in order to bring out their identity, social status and disposition. Here again, many of the tricks used in Chinese opera have been adopted. The eyes of the *jing* puppets are large and staring to underline their boldness and bravery. The *dan* puppets are almost always portrayed with slanting 'phoenix' eyes, and they are carved to give an impression of elegance and grace. Legendary figures such as Monkey and Zhu Bajie (Pigsy) from the Ming-dynasty novel *Journey to the West*, water spirits, deities and demons are personified to make them more realistic. The designs painted on the face are also exaggerated—particularly in the case of the *jing* puppets.





Classical furniture props for an interior (1), a confrontation between flying horse and winged tiger (2), an apsara or celestial musician (3), and a superbly crafted carriage (4).





When we remember that a Chinese audience s deeply familiar with all the symbols and significance of the designs, we can see how a thin piece of painted leather can convey sorrow, happiness, anxiety and anger in a marvellous fashion, as well as differentiate good from evil and loyalty from treachery. Even more astonishing, of course, is that this is achieved with just a side profile!

The Effect of Light and Shadow

A large trunk of paraphernalia means a large shadow-play troupe. Many different types of props and stage sets — thrones, tables, chairs, carriages, palaces, temples, forests, etc. — are also made of leather by exactly the same process as the puppets. All this helps to set the atmosphere and increase the dramatic effect and the narrative clarity of the shadow play in a way which can hardly be bettered in a full-scale opera performance.

During an actual performance, the puppeteers first fix the props and sets in place behind the thin white curtain which forms the 'screen'. Then, making use of special lighting (in the old days an oil lamp was used), they manipulate the puppets adroitly by means of the bamboo sticks to create lively movements in harmony with the background music and singing. There are normally four or five musicians and singers clustered behind the screen.

The subtlety of shadow theatre lies in the special effects produced by the screen backlighting and the variation in shadow density. When the puppets are placed hard up against the screen, they produce well-defined shapes with clear colours and details — not really 'shadows' at all. When held a little further from the screen, they throw shadows which are slightly larger than the actual puppet size. And when they are held even further away, they appear as larger, but softer and vaguer silhouettes. This play of light and shadow increases the effect of movement, not just with the puppet protagonists, but also with animals or even the clouds in the sky.

Although the popularity of the Shaanxi shadow play has fluctuated over its long history, it still holds a potent appeal for most Chinese people. At major festivals, professional shadow-play troupes are invited to perform in cinemas and theatres in the cities and in any available open space in the villages. For people living in remote rural areas, a shadow play is a great event, a luxurious entertainment which they can only afford once a year at the Spring Festival (Lunar New Year).

Nowadays, as minor works of art in their own right, shadow puppets are increasingly in demand for interior decoration and as artistic motifs in general.

Translated by Kitty Leung

Puppets made by Liang Sirong & Wang Tianwen



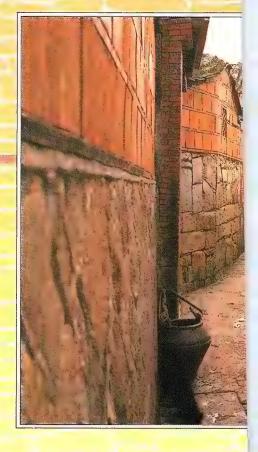




An audience watches enthralled (4) as an emperor meets his prospective son-in-law (1). Puppets of an empress (2), a dan role (3), the God of Longevity (5). Details of a female head (6).

Serendipity in the Old

PHOTOS & TEXT BY RAYMOND LAI



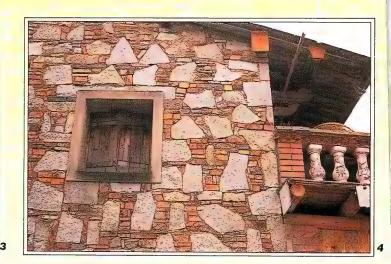


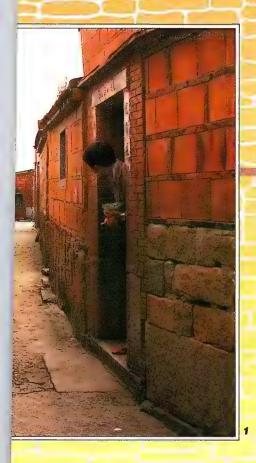
ricycles are still very common in Quanzhou, a town in the southeast of Fujian Province. Since tricyclists like to take shortcuts, I had an unexpected chance to appreciate the unusual vernacular architecture in the granite-paved lanes.

A typical single-storey house is built on a foundation of several courses of stone, contrasting with the red brick walls above (1). As Quanzhou is not far from the sea, the layers of stone act as a damp-course and render the dwelling as firm as Mount Taishan, good for a hundred years.

In a variation on the theme of stone and brick, irregular stones are laid alternately with the bricks, giving rise to a random pattern, and a plain exterior wall becomes a distinctive piece of decoration (4). Such stone and brick walls slope gradually outwards from the bottom to the top, a method of construction said to ensure that the wall would collapse outwards in an earthquake.







Lanes of Quanzhou

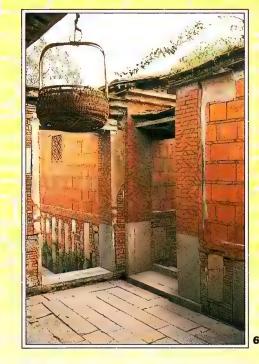
As Quanzhou faces the Taiwan Straits it is often hit by typhoons. For this reason, the houses have few windows, and these are quite small and deeply recessed (5). Local ingenuity, however, has compensated for the paucity of real windows by carving out decorative window-shapes, complete with grilles, in the brick walls (2).

As the tricycle negotiated a sudden turn, an entirely timber house came into sight (3). I could not resist stopping for a closer look. The grain of the unvarnished

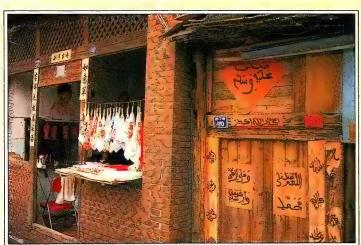
wood is clearly revealed and the original colour and lustre is enhanced by fine carvings on the door.

Nearby, a small interior courtyard repeats the harmonious theme of stone and brick (6), and a plain wooden door, embellished with squares of paper bearing auspicious couplets in Arabic, is a reminder of Quanzhou's historic connections with the so-called Silk Road of the Sea (7).

Translated by W. Lau

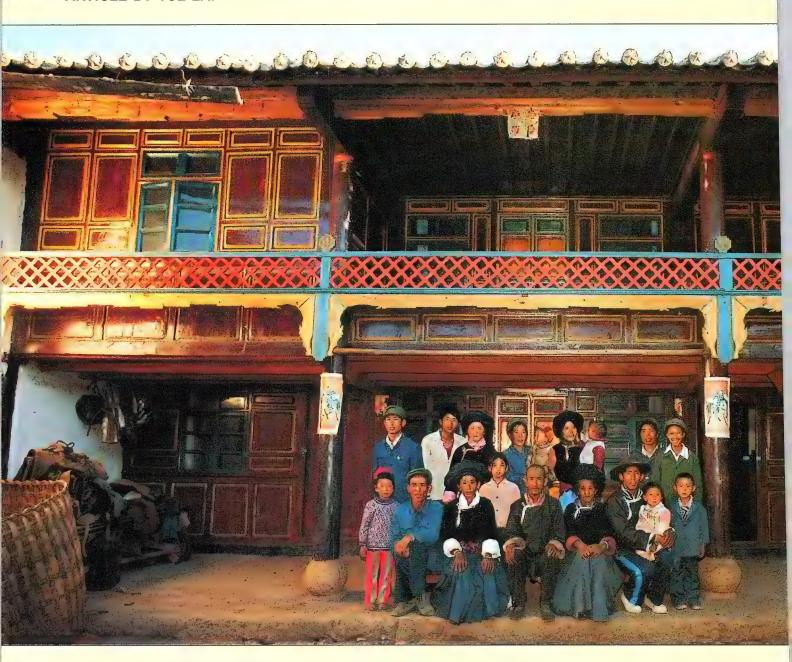


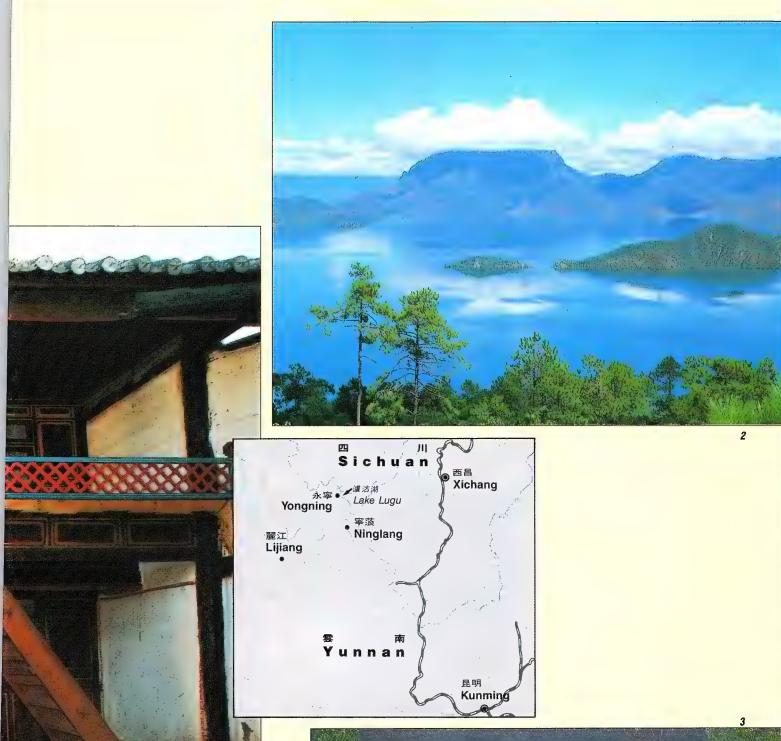




A GUEST OF THE MOSUO

PHOTOS BY TSE SEE FAN ARTICLE BY TSE LAI





The Yangs (1) live in an extended-family system near the splendour of Lake Lugu (2, by Zhao Yingjian), around the shores of which one finds many traces of Tibetan Buddhism (3).







ho are the Mosuo?', many readers will ask themselves, since this name does not appear on the list of national minorities published by the relevant Chinese authorities. Nevertheless, they exist, although there is some controversy surrounding their origin. The Mosuc themselves claim Mongolian descent but, according to a recent ethnological study, they are a sub-division of the Naxi minority. It is certainly true that, despite major differences in dress and customs, both the Naxi and the Mosuo peoples are alike in the basic structure of their traditional society which was, and to some extent still is, matriarchal.

Living in a remote area of northwestern Yunnan, the Mosuo have attracted much interest because of the degree to which they have retained their social system. They are concentrated around Lake Lugu on the high plateau north of the Ninglang Yi Autonomous County. With a circumference of more than fifty kilometres, this lake is surrounded by mountains and straddles the Yunnan-Sichuan border at 2,600 metres above sealevel. The scenery is enchanting: six small islands appear to float on the lake, while canoes glide noiselessly over the mirror-like surface.

The most convenient point of access is from Lijiang, the Naxi 'capital', from where there is a bus service to Ninglang. Another bus takes you to Luoshui, a village overlooking the western shore of Lake Lugu. Next to where you alight from the bus at the entrance to the village is the sole inn catering to visitors.

Quickly completing the registration formalities and dumping my bags, I started to explore the village at random. The most striking thing was the dress of the Mosuo women: they wear long jackets fastened with silver buttons over pleated skirts, with a wide band of red material wrapped around their waists. Some of them attach artificial pieces two or three metres long to their own hair, which is then swept up and pinned with colourful beads.

One experience not to be missed at Lake Lugu is a ride in a Mosuo canoe. Each of these craft is dug from a whole tree-trunk. The Mosuo name is auge ('pig-trough boat') and that is exactly what it looks like. I boarded a dugout cautiously, afraid to move for fear that any slight jolt on my part might capsize it. However, as the canoe glided smoothly across towards the middle of the lake, the magnificent landscape unfurling slowly before my eyes, I was so fascinated I forgot my fears and soon relaxed. The canoe was in any case perfectly balanced. We headed towards one of the islands. Ahou. The boatman told me that, in times gone by, a Mosuo headman had erected many fine buildings there. However, an inscribed stele and a few ruins are all that are visible on this now uninhabited island.

Yongning's Thermal Spring

After spending three days at the lake visiting nearby villages, I took the bus to Yongning to further my exploration of Mosuo customs.

Yongning has a population of about 20,000, most of them Mosuo, the remainder Naxi and Pumi. This is one of the major Mosuo centres. Both sides of the short main street are lined with small shops, guesthouses and restaurants, most of them sturdy log structures.

After arranging accommodation, I decided I needed a bath. The hotel-keeper told me that there was a hot spring not far from the town to the northwest and kindly lent me his bicycle to get there. On the way I stopped at a Buddhist temple (the people here adhere to Tibetan Buddhism). It was not large, and there were only a few monks praying in the main hall. However, its outer walls painted white as snow and its exquisite eave decorations seemed to light up the quiet mountain

I reached the spring shortly afterwards. This forms a natural bath-house for the townspeople. I learned later that men and women used to bathe together in the open air but, with the growing number of visitors in recent years, the local authorities decided to build a wall down the middle. Men now bathe on one side, women on the other. However, the wall is not high enough, and you can see what is going on on the other side of the wall just by tilting your head or standing on tiptoe. Obviously the Mosuo are not too preoccupied by conventional questions of modesty. I remained soaking in the hot water and kept my eyes firmly on the steam rising from the surface.

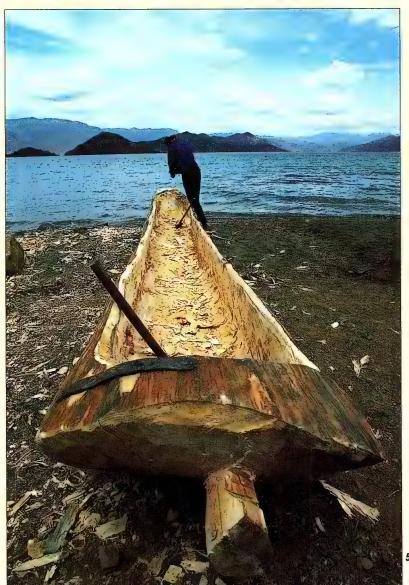
Mosuo Compound

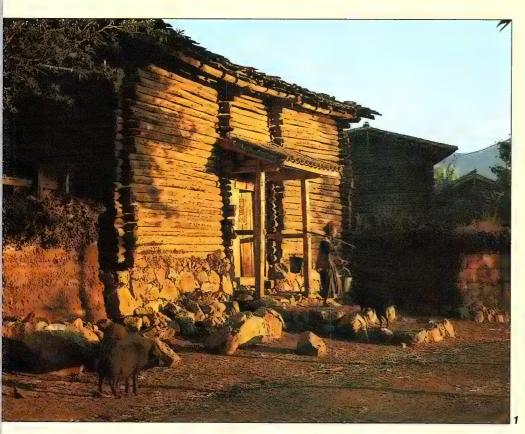
On my way back to Yongning, I was lucky enough to make the acquaintance of a Mr Yang, himself a Mosuo, who was a primary school teacher in the town. This new friend was a straightforward, cheerful fellow, and we took to each other immediately. The upshot of it was that I was invited to visit his family.

We waded through the River Kaiji and walked for another five kilometres before we reached the village of Tuozhi. Very proud of his region and his people, Mr Yang pointed to a rice field and explained that it was quite an exploit to grow paddy at this altitude (the Yongning Basin is 2,700 metres above sea-level).

It was not much further to his home. The family lived in a typical Mosuo compound consisting of four log buildings constructed around a central courtyard. The main building to the north was a single-storey one, while the other three were twostoreyed. Apparently, the ground floors of the buildings to south and west are normally used to house animals and poultry. The upper floors are divided by partitions into chambers called nizhayi, equal in number to the adult females of the family; these are the bedrooms where they receive their azhu ('lover' or 'partner'). Each nizhayi contains a small fireplace, a bed and some wooden trunks to store clothes. Elderly women and the children sleep on wooden boards around the fireplace in the main room, while unattached males sleep in a special room elsewhere in the compound. Since









the Mosuo are Buddhists, the upper floor of the eastern building is reserved for Buddhist rites and for ancestral worship. The ground floor of this building is a general storeroom where the family keeps their farming tools and other odds and ends, as well as a place for visiting lamas to rest.

Coming-of-Age Ceremony

I was welcomed into the main house by Yang's mother, the head of this family of more than twenty souls. The Mosuo still cling to many of their matriarchal practices. Thus, the oldest female member of a family is responsible for deciding how the family's income is to be spent, managing its assets and property (which descends in the female line), receiving guests, distributing work and food, and so on. It is she who has the final word in almost every aspect of daily life.

According to Mosuo custom, guests sit on the right-hand side of the fireplace, the place of honour normally occupied by the matriarch (men traditionally sit on the left). The old lady served me a cup of hot buttered tea and some sunflower seeds and invited me to stay for dinner.

It took my eyes some time to adjust to the dim interior. But then, looking around with interest at the simple arrangements, I noticed a few cabinets standing back against the walls. Above the stone top of the fireplace there was a picture of the God of the Stove, flanked by a pair of wooden pillars.

Seeing that I was curious about the latter, Yang smilingly explained that the pillar on the left is 'male', the one on the right 'female'. On reaching puberty at around thirteen, children must perform. a public coming-of-age ceremony in the early morning on New Year's Day. He continued: 'During the ceremony, the youngsters place one foot on a piece of preserved pork, the other on a sack of rice. He or she holds a string of beads in the right hand and a linen thread in the left. This is also an occasion to pay homage to the gods and the family ancestors, so lamas are invited to recite sutras and invoke the protection of Buddha. The youngsters then kneel and bow before their elders, knocking their foreheads on the ground, and receive gifts in return."

This coming-of-age ceremony is also marked by a change of clothes. Girls start to wear a skirt, boys trousers, leaving off their traditional childhood dress of a long belted robe. They are also given many social freedoms, including the right to select an *azhu*.

The Azhu System

Our conversation became increasingly animated as we enjoyed our buttered tea. I plied Yang with questions, and he showed exemplary patience in his extensive answers. One thing struck me especially. I could not resist asking Yang: 'Your family has over twenty members spanning three or four generations. How ever do you manage to maintain this extended-family system?'

Yang replied: 'Big families survive because many of us have kept up the *azhu*-type marriage. That is to say, men and women do not actually

get married; they just live together as azhu. Once a boy is considered an adult, he can take gifts to a girl he fancies and stay overnight with her in her nizhayi if she so wishes, although he continues to live with his mother's family and work for that household.

'It is usually the man who initiates the relationship, which may last for a couple of nights or a lifetime. When the couple begin to feel they can no longer live in harmony, they just discontinue the relationship — the man can leave at any time. Although the man pays towards the support of any children they may have, that also ends with the relationship. There are no other economic ties, and the responsibility for raising the children lies solely with the mother. In other words, this is a truly matrilineal system in which a child may grow up not even knowing its father's name. Under such conditions, maternal uncles play an important role in helping sisters bring up their children.'

Though this system lives on today, more and more Mosuo people have accepted monogamy over the past twenty years. Taking his own family as an example, Yang said that he was monogamous and properly married to his wife, and one of his sisters was also married, the brother-in-law having come to live under his wife's roof

This azhu system is reflected in Mosuo legends. For example, the 4,000-metre Mount Shizi north of Lake Lugu is thought to personify a beautiful goddess, Ganmu, who is credited with several azhu of her own, all mountain deities. She is the goddess of love and fertility, and thus associated with the success of the harvest. On the twenty-fifth day of the seventh lunar month, local people dress in their best and go to the mountain to offer gifts; this is also the occasion for both men and women to choose an azhu.

Symbol of Wealth

After dinner Yang showed me round the complex. When we reached the upper room reserved for religious rites, I would have liked to stay longer to talk with Yang's uncle, a lama. However, he was engrossed in prayer so we slipped downstairs without disturbing him.

In the storeroom below, I noticed several preserved pig carcasses. These are traditional Mosuo fare, made by de-boning the animal (except for the head), gutting it and sprinkling it with salt, after which it is pressed and wind-dried. I was told that well-preserved pork would keep for more than ten years. Apart from forming an important part of the diet of the Mosuo people, preserved pork also used to be a symbol of wealth.

Dusk was falling as we finished our brief walk around the courtyard. We went back into the main house where I suggested that we take a photograph of the entire family. Amid the hubbub of excitement, my hostess calmly performed her role as head of the family and told everybody where to stand or sit.

Translated by Ursula Yeung



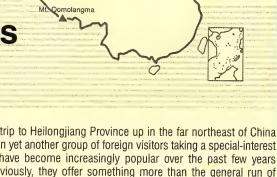
Pigs are raised by most Mosuo households (1), as preserved pork (4) keeps for many years. A Mosuo family of the past (5) and present-day elders (2, 3) (last three by Zheng Bingyun).





Tours with a Difference: Catering for Special Interests

TEXT BY PETER GARDNER



Inner Mongolie

deilongjiang Mt. Changbai



Su Changde

n a recent trip to Heilongjiang Province up in the far northeast of China I came upon yet another group of foreign visitors taking a special-interest tour. Such tours have become increasingly popular over the past few years because, quite obviously, they offer something more than the general run of tour circuits, given the latter's emphasis on sightseeing. Accompanied by Chinese experts in the particular field, participants have the added advantage that doors are opened and access permitted in places which are usually 'off limits' for ordinary tourists. These tours are tailor-made for people with a special interest or hobby.

The common interest for the group of mainly middle-aged tourists I met happened to be birds. In Heilongjiang there is a wildlife reserve — the Zhalong Nature Reserve — which is known to birdwatching and conservation enthusiasts the world over since it is the site of a project to save rare birds such as the red-crowned crane from extinction. Located at the tip of a gigantic marsh, it also offers rare opportunities to watch a great variety of waterfowl and migrants at close quarters. This particular group had come from half-way round the world, and their tour was specially organized to give participants a chance to further their birdwatching skills and knowledge.

Still in China's northeast, the Changbai Mountains in Jilin Province — hard by the border with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — present features which set them apart from other mountain chains. Besides their fantastic-shaped peaks, the highest rising to 2,700 metres above sea-level, mysterious valleys and other natural attractions such as beautiful Lake Tianchi, they boast no fewer than four plant distribution belts, ranging from temperate to cold-resistant to alpine tundra. Here, in addition to the great forests, are to be found many kinds of exotic flowers and rare grasses, including nearly one thousand medicinal herbs — a botanist's paradise. Chinese experts accompany tour groups, explaining points of interest and adding to background knowledge.

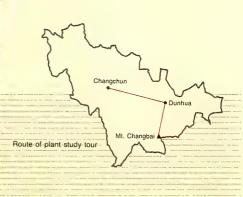
Somewhat more esoteric are the tours arranged for those with an interest





Guo Lü





Guo Lü

in the art of Chinese calligraphy. China has a great many examples of its finest calligraphers' works which have been passed down through the ages. These cultural treasures are sometimes preserved in bound volumes or as wall scrolls, sometimes carved into rocks or on steles. Understandably, tours to study fine calligraphy are especially popular with the Japanese, since their own written language incorporates Chinese characters as *kanji*. In addition to being able to appreciate the original writings of historical figures, visitors also get the chance to meet and exchange views with modern masters of the brush, and demonstrate their own skills.

While our attention is focused on things quintessentially Chinese, we should mention another special-interest tour which has caught the attention of many Westerners. For a long time now there has been a growing interest in the West in traditional Chinese medicine — such practices as the use of herbal remedies, acupuncture, acupressure, moxibustion, cupping and massage. Most big cities throughout the world today have practitioners trained in such forms of alternative therapy. Anyone with an interest in Oriental medicine can now visit some of China's leading hospitals to observe treatment in progress, ask questions of the doctors there, and attend lectures on the subject. Longer courses are available for Western doctors and those wishing to study Chinese medicine in depth.

One special-interest tour which has proved popular with people from all over the world is the 'Locomotive Tour'. In most countries now, despite active interest and thriving train enthusiasts' clubs, classic locomotives are a thing of the past — no longer to be seen except in museums and books. In China, however, where the railway system is still the most important means of moving goods and people over longer distances, the national railways operate a wide range of locomotives, from smart new diesels to old steam models.

Tour groups are taken to building and maintenance yards and on rail trips where they can observe locomotives in action. In Jilin Province, tourists even have the chance to travel through great forests on the miniature trains which

are used mainly for hauling timber. There is one forest track which runs for 169 kilometres and has two branch lines forty-four kilometres long.

But, trains or no trains, there can be no other nation on the face of this earth where the population places so much value on the bicycle. Taking bicycle transport a step further, tours are now arranged so that foreign cycling enthusiasts can come to China and pedal their way around the countryside. Perhaps more than any other way, such a form of travel allows those taking part to really get to know the land and the people at a more profound level than would otherwise be the case. After a strenuous day's cycling, participants can relax in the accommodation prepared for them, be it a city hotel or a simple hut out in the country. These bicycle tours are especially popular with the young and fit and those who are not afraid of roughing it.

Special-interest tours so far successfully organized include mountaineering tours, not forgetting such superlative destinations as Mount Qomolangma (Everest), and horse-riding tours on the grasslands of Inner Mongolia. There are 'World of Ice' tours in Heilongjiang where a famous ice festival is held every year in the capital, Harbin. There are folk customs tours where participants have the opportunity to stay in the homes of ordinary village people. There are even hunting tours in Heilongjiang's Lesser Hinggan Mountains where, besides hunting, you can get in some skiing and even ride in sleighs.... You can 'Walk the Great Wall'; you can go scuba-diving off the Leizhou Peninsula in Guangdong Province or at the southern tip of Hainan Island. There are geological tours, archaeological tours, Silk Road tours, Grand Canal and Yellow River tours, martial arts tours, Mandarin language tours and even — a spin-off from the film — 'The Last Emperor' package tours!

Whatever your special interest, it would seem that there is a tour just for you. The pleasure of being with similar-minded people guarantees the experience of a lifetime.





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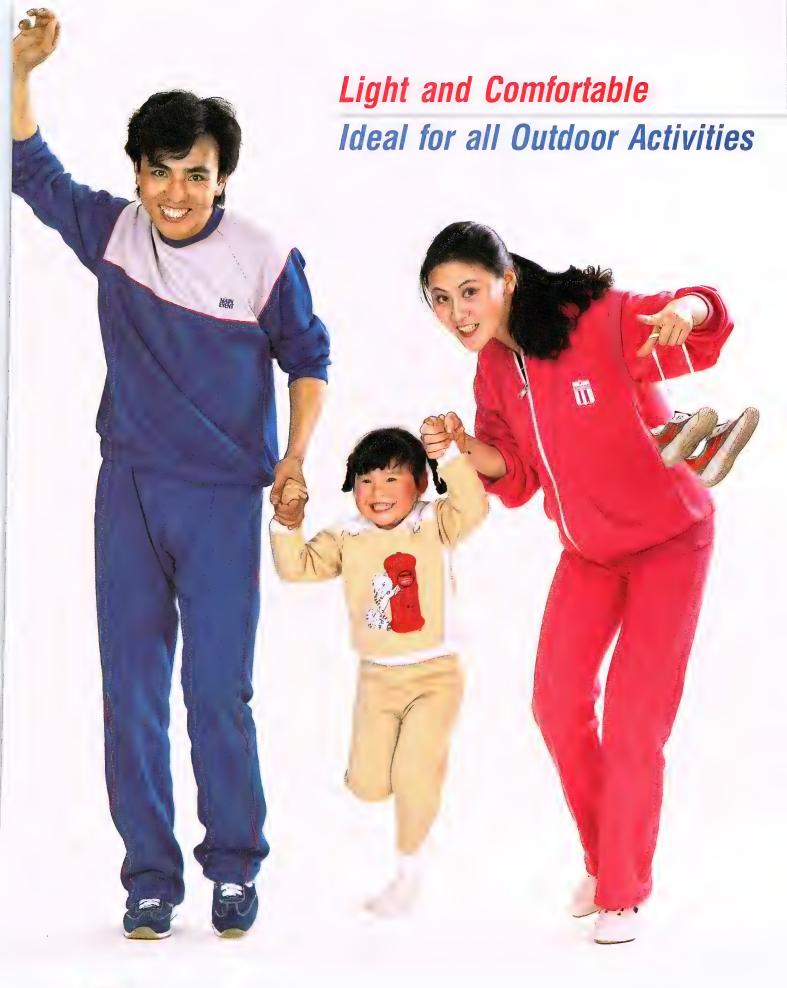
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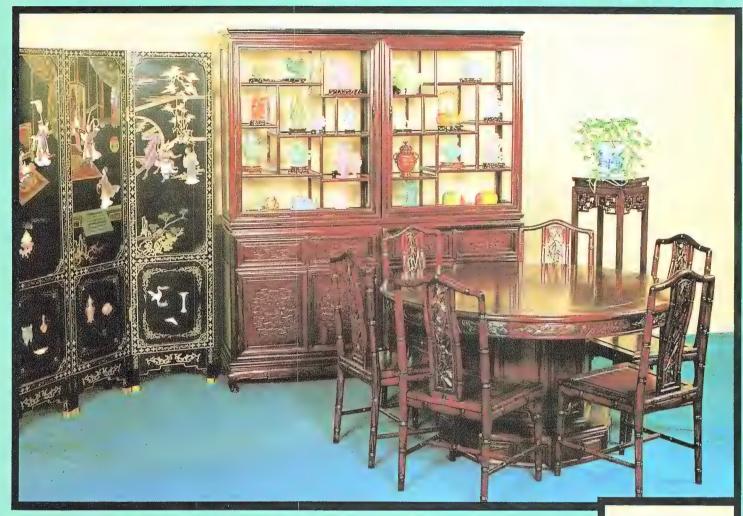


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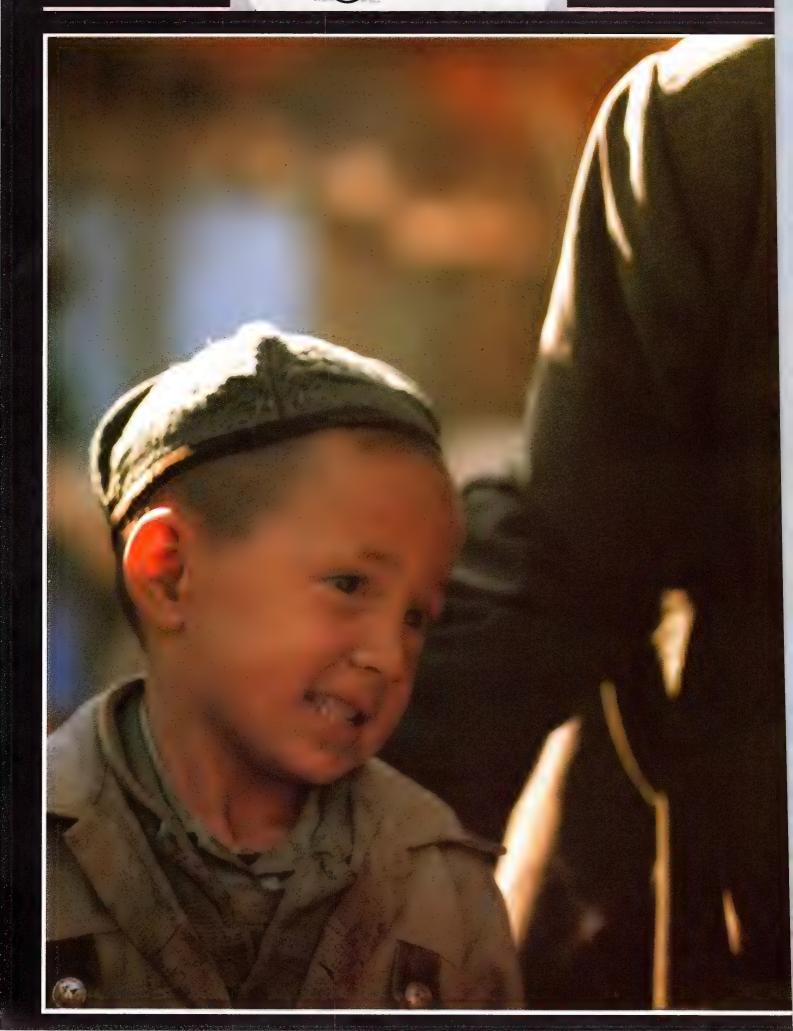


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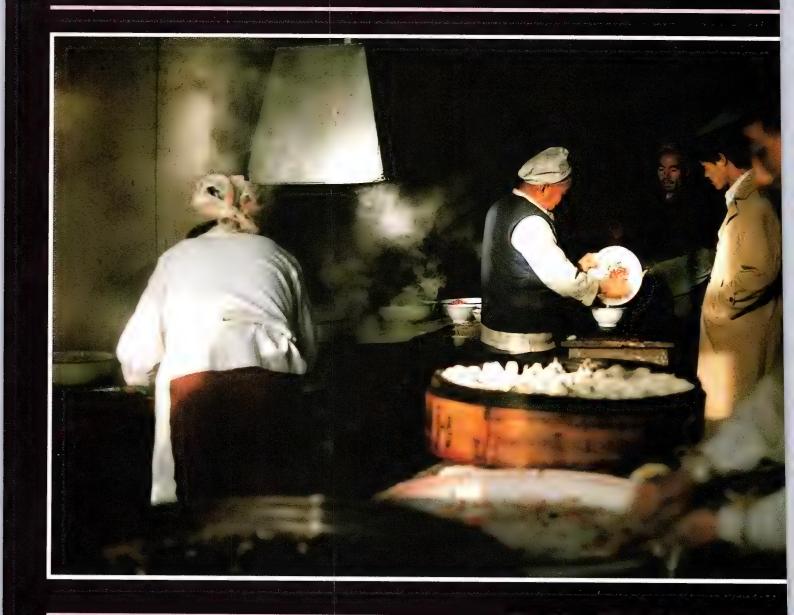
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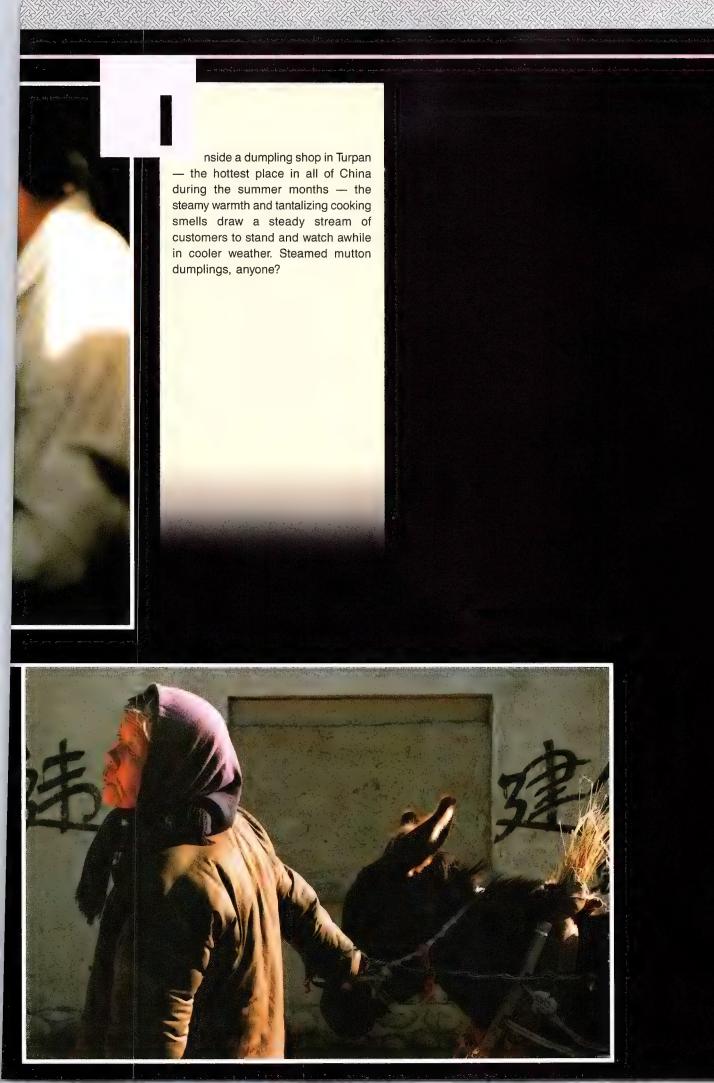
ar up in China's northwest, in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, the inhabitants are battered by extremes of temperature, from the arid, gruelling heat of summer to the harsh chill of winter. But the warmth of human ties is in no way affected. Here, a hoary Uygur grandfather bends to catch his grandson's ingenuous chatter, the light of love on both faces enhanced by the glow of the winter sun.

PHOTOS BY LEE HIN LAM



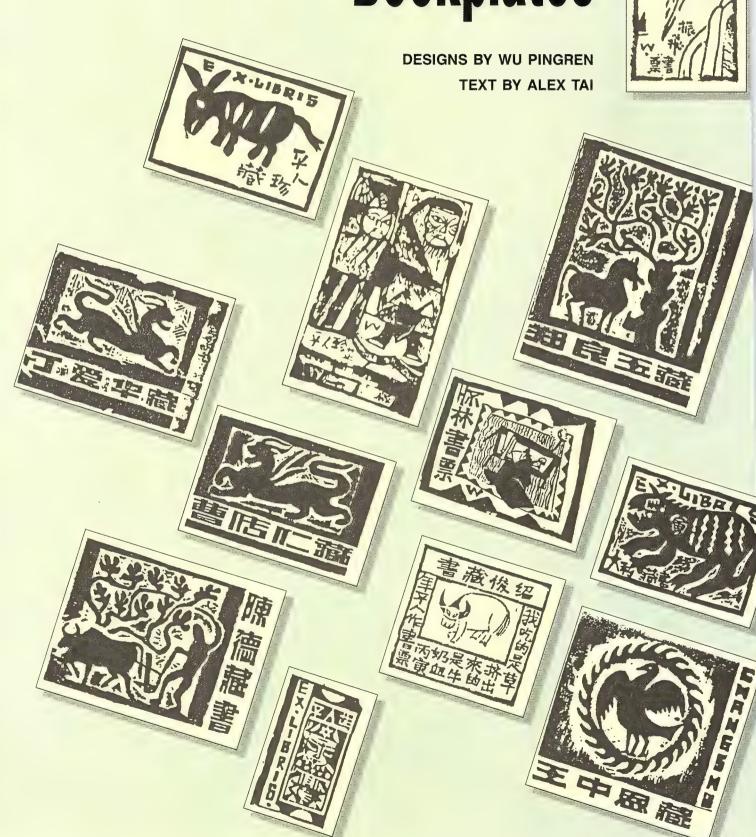
W

ith the rising of the sun, heralding another winter's day, an elderly Uygur sets out with her donkey. Head held high despite life's many knocks, she takes for granted a lifestyle of unremitting physical effort — without complaint, without expectations....



Ex-Libris Bookplates





x-libris bookplates have been established in the West for around four hundred years, but the idea has only been current in China for a relatively short time. At present ex-libris collecting, although a fairly new concept, is highly popular as a hobby among Chinese students and book-lovers.

According to the historical records, bookplates were first used in Germany in the fifteenth century; bibliophiles and those lucky enough to have a private library would paste a small identifying design inside the front cover of a book (books being exceedingly rare and valuable objects) to prove ownership. Exactly the same thing happened in China in the old days, but in the form of a special seal which was applied to the book's cover. Up until the 1920s bookplates were rarely used in China and then basically only by intellectuals such as Yu Dafu (1896-1945), a modern writer who was also an ardent patriot known for his denunciation of traditional society and his revolt against all constraints on the individual.

Generally speaking, for practical purposes, bookplates should not be too big. The most convenient size is somewhere between five and ten centimetres square. One of the reasons why they make such popular collectors' items is their sheer diversity: as style and subject-matter are determined solely by the taste of the individual, the possibilities are limitless. European designs tend to concentrate on illustrations of proverbs and delicate figure drawings, while the Chinese and Japanese taste is more for motifs with a traditional cultural flavour - auspicious signs, legendary beasts, symbols of the twelve birth-years, etc. - especially when executed in the manner of ancient woodcuts or woodblock prints. On the whole, Chinese bookplates emphasize the 'woodcut' feeling, the better to bring out the strong, simple archaism of the designs.

Understandably, it is writers and bibliophiles who have amassed the most interesting collections of ex-libris bookplates. Although the subject and composition is decided by the owner's personal tastes, he or she tends to have to turn to an artist to actually create the design. The large characters on a bookplate form the name of the owner, but there is almost always a small seal stamped somewhere to identify the artist responsible.

Besides their purely practical applications, bookplates are collected by many people (whence the term 'ex-librists') just as one might collect stamps, first-day covers or postcards. Amateur collectors' associations exist throughout the world to exchange information and stage exhibitions. The Chinese Ex-Libris Study Council was established recently with the aim of developing this interest in China on a deeper and more organized level.







Happy-Co.Lucks



This is the story of a scatterbrained young woman who lived in East Village.

One night as she lay in bed with her baby beside her, she dreamed her mother was very sick.

She burst into tears and started off at once to see her mother, grabbing her baby lying beside her in the dark room.

She rushed so fast, she was out of breath and sweating all over by the time she arrived in West Village where her mother lived.



Arriving at her mother's house, this happy-golucky young woman knocked on the door and shouted: 'Are you all right, mother?' 'What do you mean? I'm fine,' came the reply.

Her mother was looking exceptionally well for the time of morning. 'What are you doing in that padded coat in summer?' asked the older woman. Sure enough, the careless young mother had put on her husband's new padded jacket. 'No wonder I was all in a sweat,' she said, laughing at herself. 'Let me see my grandson,' said the woman's mother, and was surprised again when she found it was a big gourd her daughter was holding so tenderly.

nama

ADAPTED BY FANG YUAN ILLUSTRATED BY ZHOU XIANCHE

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Because she was so worried, she took a short cut through a field and tripped over a gourd. Her baby flew out of her arms, but she groped around and soon found its rounded shape. Making her way into West Village she thought: 'Good child! You didn't even cry when you fell like that. You're really Mama's treasure.'



'Oh', cried the careless young mother, 'I must have lost my baby in the gourd field!'



She searched the entire field for her baby without success. Then she felt something soft at her feet and happily picked it up.



It was nearly daybreak when the young mother got home. But what was that lying there sleeping so sweetly? Why, it was her baby! What she was carrying in her arms was her patterned pillow.



Wu Song Kills the Tiger

An Except from Outlaws of the Marsh



owards the end of the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), a stormy period marked by popular uprisings, a certain Song Jiang became the leader of a band of brigands which roamed the area of present-day Shandong Province where the Huanghe (Yellow River) meets the Grand Canal and Lake Dongping. Using the impenetrable marshlands around Mount Liangshan as their hide-out, they successfully resisted all attempts by the government troops to stop their activities.

Gradually, snippets of gossip about the band's doings evolved into tales which eventually reached the ears of the professional story-tellers who frequented the markets, teahouses and entertainment districts of the urban centres. Ever mindful of a good, strong storyline, they embroidered and glamourized the material, turning the brigands into folk heroes in the process.

In the early Ming dynasty, the products of centuries of vernacular story-telling were polished and recast in the form of a long novel by Shi Nai'an (c. 1296-1370), a native of northern Jiangsu, and Luo Guanzhong, about whom little is known. This masterpiece, Shui Hu Zhuan (Outlaws of the Marsh, also translated as Water Margin), represented a novel approach for Chinese literature in the superb way it gave depth and conviction to a vast range of characters, both male and female.

Despite the episodic style, the plot is tightly woven. The 108 outlaws range from farmers and fishermen to army officers, merchants, scholars and even landowners. Although their personalities and backgrounds are so different, they all have a strong sense of justice, which is what eventually turns them against the corrupt higher authorities. The language employed - lively and earthy - is much closer to the spoken language than to classical Chinese since the novel was aimed at entertaining a wide and not particularly well-educated readership rather than scholars and literati. Interestingly, the story-telling basis still peeps through in certain features: the equal length of the chapters (appropriate for a single story-telling session); the short poem at the beginning of each chapter, summarizing what is to follow; and the invariable cliff-hanging finish.

For around six hundred years, Shui Hu Zhuan has entertained Chinese people of all ages and all stations in life, whether as listeners or as readers. It has served as a rich and virtually inexhaustible source for dramas, operas, shadow plays, books and films. It has also fuelled controversy at times when the outlaws were considered particularly bad role models (Song Jiang was denounced as a 'reactionary revisionist' during the Cultural Revolution).

Our excerpt is taken from Chapter 23, which introduces the figure of Wu Song, a man of iron, strong and courageous (and occasionally brutal), still some time before the family tragedy and web of official indifference and collusion which forces him to become an outlaw. This particular exploit is due less to his own strength than to that of the local brew!

We'll divide our story in two and talk now of Wu Song after he left Song Jiang. That night he put up at an inn. The next morning he rose and had breakfast, paid the bill, tied his pack, took up his staff and set forth.

"Song Jiang is known in the gallant fraternity as Timely Rain," he thought. "He certainly deserves his name! I'll never regret becoming friends with a brother like that!"

He travelled for several days and came to Yanggu County. It was noon and he was a good distance from the county town, and he was hungry and thirsty from walking. Further up the road he saw a tavern. By the doorway hung a pennant reading: Three bowls and you can't cross the ridge.

Wu Song went inside, sat down, and rested his staff. "Wine, quickly, host," he called.

The tavern keeper brought three bowls, a pair of chopsticks and a plate of tidbits, placed them on the table, and filled one of the bowls to the brim with wine. Wu Song raised the bowl and drained it.

"This wine has a kick in it! If you've got anything filling, host, I'll buy some to go with the drinks."

"We only have cooked beef."

"Slice me two or three catties of the best part."

The host went back inside and came out with two catties of beef on a large platter, which he placed before Wu Song. Then he filled another bowl. Wu Song drank it.

"Very good wine!" he said. And he downed another. That was his third bowl. The host poured no more. Wu Song rapped on the table.

"Host, where's the wine?"

"More beef, sir? Coming right up."

"I want beef and wine, both."

"I'll slice some beef for you, but I can't give you any more wine."

"That's screwy! Why not?"

"Didn't you see that pennant hanging by my door *Three bowls and you can't cross the ridge?*" gueried the tavern keeper.

"What does it mean?"

"Although our wine is just a village product, it's as fragrant as the old brews. Any traveller who drinks three bowls of it gets drunk and can't cross that ridge there. Hence, the name. No one who stops here ever asks for more than three bowls."

Wu Song smiled, "So that's it. I've had three bowls. Why aren't I drunk?"

"My wine is called 'Seeps Through the Bottle Fragrance'. It's also called 'Collapse Outside the Door'. You don't feel anything at first. But a little later, down you go."

"Poppycock! I'm paying, aren't I? Pour me three more bowls!"

Seeing that the wine had little effect on Wu Song, the tavern keeper again filled three bowls with wine. The big fellow drank them.

with wine. The big fellow drank them.
"Excellent," he cried. "Host, I'll pay you bowl for bowl. Just keep pouring."

"You'd better take it easy, sir. This wine really knocks people out! And there's no medicine that brings them around!"

"Bullshit! Even if you doped it, I've got a nose,

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haven't !!"

The tayern keeper couldn't convince him. Again he filled the three bowls.

"Bring me another two catties of beef," said Wu Sona.

The host served the sliced meat and poured three more bowls of wine. Wu Song's appetite seemed to improve. He put some silver on the table.

"Look here," he called. "Is this enough for the wine and meat?"

"Plenty," said the tavern keeper. "In fact I owe you some change."

"I don't want any change. Just keep the wine coming.

"There are five or six bowls left. But I doubt that you can finish them."

"Five, six, or even more, I'll drink as many as you've got."

"You're a big hulking fellow. If you fall, how am I going to pick you up?"

"If you have to pick me up, I'm no real man!" The host continued to stall. Wu Song grew irritated. "I'm paying for what I drink," he said.

"Don't make me mad, or I'll smash up your place and turn it ass over tea kettle!"

"This rogue is drunk," thought the tavern keeper. "I'd better not provoke him!"

He served Wu Song six more bowls of wine, a total of eighteen in all.

Wu Song grasped his staff and rose to his feet. "I'm not a bit drunk!" He laughed as he went out the door. "Who says 'Three bowls and you can't cross the ridge'?" He started walking away.

The tavern keeper ran after him, "Where are you going, sir?" he shouted.

Wu Song halted. "What's it to you? I don't owe you anything, do !? What are you velling about?"

"I mean well. Come back. I want to show you a government proclamation."

'What does it say?'

"There's a fierce tiger with a white forehead and bulging eyes on Jingyang Ridge. It comes out at night, and has already killed nearly thirty strong men. The authorities have ordered hunters to capture it, on pain of being beaten, and have posted this warning at every path leading to the ridge. It says travellers must go in groups and cross only between late morning and early afternoon. At all other times the ridge is closed. No one is permitted to travel alone. It's already late, and I saw you setting off without a word. I don't want you to kill yourself! Why not spend the night at my place, and then tomorrow you can gradually get together a band of twenty or thirty travellers and cross the ridge in safety.'

Wu Song laughed, "I'm a Qinghe County man. I've crossed that ridge at least twenty times. I've never seen any tiger. Don't try to scare me with that crap. Even if there is a tiger, I'm not afraid."

"I'm only trying to save you. If you don't believe me, come in and have a look at the proclamation."

"Balls! I'm not scared of any tiger. You want to keep me here so that in the middle of the night you can rob me, kill me! That's why you're trying to frighten me with your tiger story!"

"All right! You take my good for evil and talk to me like that! Don't believe me, then! On your way!" The tavern keeper shook his head and went back inside.

Staff in hand, Wu Song strode off towards Jingyang Ridge. After walking four or five li he came to the foot of it. A piece of bark had been peeled from a large tree, and on the white patch words were written. Wu Song could read quite well, and he saw that it was a notice with this inscription: Of late a tiger on Jingyang Ridge has been killing people. Travellers must form bands and cross only between late morning and early afternoon. Do not take risks.

Wu Song grinned. "That host is a crafty one. Scares his customers into staying the night. Well, he can't scare me!"

He proceeded up the slope, holding his staff level. It was late afternoon by then, and the red sun was pressing on the mountains in the west. Still primed by all the wine he had consumed, Wu Song continued climbing the ridge. Before he had gone another half li he came upon a dilapidated Mountain Spirit Temple. A notice was posted on the door. It read:

Yanggu County Notice: Lately, a big tiger has been killing people on Jingyang Ridge. Although all township leaders, village chiefs and hunters have been ordered to capture the beast or be beaten, they have so far failed. Travellers are permitted to cross the ridge only between late morning and early afternoon, and only in bands. At other times, and to single travellers at any time, the ridge is closed, lest the tiger take their lives. Let this be known to all.

So there really was a tiger! The notice with its official seal confirmed that. Wu Song considered returning to the tavern. But then he said to himself: "If I do that, the host will laugh at me for a coward." I can't go back." He thought a moment. "What's there to be afraid of," he exclaimed. "Just keep climbing and see what happens."

He walked on. The warmth of the wine rose in him, and he pushed back the felt hat till it was hanging by the string on his shoulders. Clapping the staff under one arm, he plodded up the slope. When he looked back at the sun, it was almost gone. The days are short in late autumn, and the nights are long. It gets dark early.

"There isn't any tiger," he said to himself. "People just scare themselves and don't dare come up the mountain."

The wine was burning inside him as he walked. With his staff in one hand, he unbuttoned his tunic with the other. His gait was unsteady now, and he staggered into a thicket. Before him was a large smooth rock. He rested his staff against it, clambered onto its flat surface, and prepared to sleep.

Suddenly a wild gale blew, and when it passed a roar came from behind the thicket and out bounded a huge tiger. Its malevolent upwardslanting eyes gleamed beneath a broad white

"Aiya!" cried Wu Song. He jumped down, seized his staff, and slipped behind the rock.

Both hungry and thirsty, the big animal clawed the ground with its front paws a couple of times, sprang high and came hurtling forward. The wine poured out of Wu Song in a cold sweat. Quicker than it takes to say, he dodged, and the huge beast landed beyond him. Tigers can't see behind them. so as its front paws touched the ground it tried to side-swipe Wu Song with its body. Again he dodged, and the tiger missed. With a thunderous roar that shook the ridge, the animal slashed at Wu Song with its iron tail. Once more he swivelled out of the way.

Now this tiger had three methods for getting its victim - spring, swipe and slash. But none of them had worked, and the beast's spirit diminished by half. Again it roared, and whirled around.

Wu Song raised his staff high in a two-handed grip and swung with all his might. There was a loud crackling, and a large branch, leaves and all, tumbled past his face. In his haste, he had struck an old tree instead of the tiger, snapping the staff in two and leaving him holding only the remaining half.

Lashing itself into a roaring fury, the beast charged. Wu Song leaped back ten paces, and the tiger landed in front of him. He threw away the stump of his staff, seized the animal by the ruff and bore down. The tiger struggled frantically, but Wu Song was exerting all his strength, and wouldn't give an inch. He kicked the beast in the face and eyes, again and again. The tiger roared, its wildly scrabbling claws pushing back two piles of yellow earth and digging a pit before it. Wu Song pressed the animal's muzzle into the pit, weakening it further. Still relentlessly clutching the beast by the ruff with his left hand, Wu Song freed his right, big as an iron mallet, and with all his might began to pound.

After sixty or seventy blows the tiger, blood streaming from eyes, mouth, nose and ears, lay motionless, panting weakly. Wu Song got up and searched around under the pine tree until he found the stump of his broken staff. With this he beat the animal till it breathed no more. Then he tossed the staff aside.

'I'd better drag this dead tiger down the mountain," he thought. He tried to lift the beast, lying in a pool of blood, but couldn't move it. He was exhausted, the strength gone out of his hands and

Wu Song sat down on the rock and rested. "It's nearly dark," he thought. "If another tiger comes I won't be able to fight it. I'd better get off this ridge first, somehow. Then, tomorrow morning, I can decide what to do.'

He collected his broad-brimmed felt hat from beside the rock, skirted the thicket, and slowly descended the ridge. Wu Song had travelled less than half a li when two tigers leaped out of the tall dry grass.

"Aiya!" he exclaimed. "I'm a goner!"

But there in the shadows the two tigers suddenly stood upright. He looked closely and saw that they were men with tiger pelts bound tightly around them. Each held a five-pronged pitchfork.

They stared at Wu Song in amazement.

"Have you eaten a crocodile's heart, or a panther's gall, or a lion's leg, that you're so full of courage?" they cried. "How dare you cross the ridge at dusk, alone and weaponless? Are you a man or a demon?"

"Who are you two?" Wu Song demanded.

"We're local hunters."

"What are you doing on this ridge?"

"Don't you know?" the hunters asked in surprise. "There's a big tiger up here! It comes out at night and preys on people. It's killed seven or eight of us hunters alone, and more travellers than we can remember! The county magistrate has ordered the township and village leaders and us hunters to capture it. But it's so powerful nobody dares go near it! We've been beaten time and again because of this, but we still can't catch the beast. Tonight it's our turn to try. We've got a dozen peasants with us, and we've laid spring-bows with poisoned arrows all over the place. We were waiting here in ambush when we saw your big form moving down the ridge. You scared the life out of us! Who are you, anyway? Have you seen the tiger?"

"I'm a Qinghe County man. My name's Wu, a second son. I just met the tiger up there beside a thicket. I punched and kicked it to death."

The hunters gaped. "You're kidding!"

"Look at the blood on my clothes if you don't believe me."

"How did it happen?"

Wu Song told them the whole story. The two hunters listened, joyous and astonished, then shouted for their peasant band. The men soon crowded round, carrying pitchforks, snare-bows, knives and spears.

"Why weren't they with you?" Wu Song asked

the hunters.

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'The tiger was too fierce. They didn't dare come up." The hunters repeated Wu Song's story to the peasants. None of them believed it.

"Come along with me, then," said Wu Song, "and see for yourself."

They had flint and steel and struck a fire, and lit six or seven torches. They went with him up the ridge to where the tiger lay dead in a great heap. Everyone was delighted. A man was sent immediately to report to the village chief and the leading family in charge. Five or six peasants trussed up the tiger and carried it down the ridge slung from a pole.

When the party reached the foot of the ridge seventy or eighty people were already waiting, noisy and animated. They formed a procession, with the dead tiger in front, and Wu Song following on an open litter, and marched to the home of the leading family.

Both the head of the family and the village chief were waiting to welcome him at the entrance to the village. The tiger was placed in front of a hall. Another twenty or thirty men — hunters and the heads of prominent township families — also greeted Wu Song.

"What is your name, young stalwart," they asked, "and where are you from?"
"I'm from the neighbouring county of Qinghe.



My name is Wu Song, and I'm a second son. On my way home from Cangzhou yesterday afternoon I got drunk in a tavern on the other side of the ridge. I climbed the ridge and met the tiger." He told in detail how he fought the beast with fists and feet.

"Truly, a hero," his listeners cried.

The hunters presented him with game and drank his health. Wu Song was exhausted from his battle with the tiger and wanted to sleep. The head of the leading family ordered his vassals to prepare a guest-room for Wu Song's use. He sent word to the county seat the following morning, and had a special litter built so that the tiger could be delivered there.

Wu Song got up at daybreak, washed and rinsed his mouth. His host and the others brought a cooked sheep and two buckets of wine to the front of the hall to feast him. Wu Song put his clothes on, adjusted his head kerchief, and went out and joined them. Raising their cups, they toasted him.

"That tiger killed countless people, and for that reason the hunters were beaten several times," they said. "But you came, young stalwart, and rid us of that calamity, bringing us luck and making the road safe for travel! We owe everything to you!"

"I have no talents. I was only borrowing from your predestined good fortune."

Everyone congratulated Wu Song, and they

drank all morning. The tiger was placed upon the litter. Members of the prominent families draped Wu Song with silks and flowers. His luggage was placed in safe-keeping, then everyone marched through the village gate. Emissaries of the magistrate had long since been waiting to escort Wu Song to the Yanggu County office. They greeted him, and ordered four vassals to convey him in an open sedan-chair. Decked with silks and flowers, he followed behind the tiger as the procession advanced on Yanggu County.

When the townspeople heard that a brave young fellow had killed the big tiger on Jingyang Ridge, they all turned out, cheering, and swarmed to the county office. From his sedan-chair, Wu Song looked at the noisy throngs crowding every street and lane. Everyone wanted to see the tiger. The magistrate was waiting in a hall inside the

county office compound.

Wu Song descended from the sedan-chair, slung the great beast over his shoulders, walked up to the hall, and placed the tiger in the entrance way. The magistrate gazed at the strapping young man, then at the huge striped animal, and he thought: "No one else could have killed that tiger!"

He summoned Wu Song into the hall. Wu Song

hailed him respectfully.

"How were you able to kill the beast?" the magistrate asked.

Wu Song told his story. Everyone listened in stupefaction. The magistrate gave him several cups of wine, and rewarded him with one thousand strings of cash contributed by the prominent families.

"It was only because I was basking in Your Excellency's lucky aura that I was able to kill the tiger. I have no ability of my own," said Wu Song. "How can I accept any reward? I've heard that, because of the tiger, Your Excellency punished the hunters several times. I'd like to give the thousand strings of cash to them."

"If that's how you feel, it's up to you."

Wu Song promptly distributed the money among the hunters. The magistrate, impressed by his generosity and honesty, decided to raise him in rank.

"Although you are from Qinghe, it's very close to our Yanggu County," he said. "I'm thinking of making you a constable here. How about it?"

Wu Song dropped to his knees. "If Your Excellency favours me I'll be grateful all my life!"

The magistrate instructed his clerk to draw up the appropriate documents that very day commissioning Wu Song a constable in the police force. All the heads of the leading families came and congratulated him, and drank with him for four or five consecutive days.

"I wanted to go home to Qinghe and see brother," Wu Song said to himself. "Who would have thought I'd wind up a constable in Yanggu!"

Thereafter, he had the affection of his superiors and was famed throughout the countryside. Translated by Sidney Shapiro

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Highlights of Anhui Cuisine

Even though it may not be as famous as other types of Chinese cuisine such as those of Sichuan or Guangdong, Anhui cooking does have its own distinctive appeal. One of China's eight major cuisines, it includes dishes from southern Anhui and from the areas along the rivers Yangtse and Huaihe which cross the province to the south and north, respectively.

Southern Anhui cuisine is the most representative. It originated in Shexian County in Huizhou Prefecture. Following the Opium War (1840-1842), the city of Tunxi became a distributing centre for Anhui teas and other famous local products such as Hui ink and She inkstones. As the city's trade flourished, the focus of southern Anhui cuisine

shifted to Tunxi.

This style of cooking is famous for its game and seafood, such as soft-shelled turtle and masked civet, cooked mostly with ham and a dash of crystal sugar. The intention is to preserve the natural flavour of the food as much as possible. It is particularly noted for its special way of treating fish. To prepare braised fish tail, for example, the fish is fried with a little oil and stock over a high flame for five or six minutes, which makes the fish very tender. For another famous traditional dish, salted mandarin fish, the fish is first marinated in salt water, lightly fried, then cooked over a slow flame. One of the best places to enjoy Anhui cookery in Tunxi is the Anhui Food Restaurant which is newly built to a traditional design.

Places along the Yangtse such as Wuhu and Anqing have a slightly different style of cuisine. Here the major ingredients are freshwater products and poultry and the major seasoning is sugar. One special local cooking process is smoking with tea leaves or wood chips. Take, for example, the hilsa herring found in the Yangtse. Apart from the usual methods of steaming or braising fish, the famous Maofeng tea from Mount Huangshan is used to smoke the herring, producing a delicious and aromatic dish.

North of the Huaihe River, the major centres including Bengbu, Suxian and Fuyang, cooking is saltier as well as spicy, with heavier sauces and much use of coriander. The famed Fuliji roast chicken of this division of Anhui cuisine is stewed in soy sauce with a dozen kinds of spices at high heat to start with, then simmered. The chicken is so tender after this process that the meat can simply be shaken loose from the bone. Wuhu Restaurant and Tieshan Hotel Restaurant are two of the places that offer this dish.

This type of Anhui cuisine is also known for its fish soup. Fish from, mainly, the River Huaihe is boiled to produce a thick, creamy-white soup. In Hefei, which lies right in the centre of Anhui, there are several good places to try the local cooking, such as the restaurants at the Daoxianglou and Jianghuai Hotels, and the Lüyangcun Restaurant.

(Continued from page 41)

Historic Traces of Islam



boom years from the middle of the Ming to the end of the Qing dynasty, many more Moslems moved north of the Yangtse.

Linqing's mosque is said to have been constructed by General Chang Yuchun (who helped to establish the Ming dynasty). It is divided into two parts, a northern section for men, and an eastern section for women. (In many Moslem societies, women are not permitted to enter the main body of the mosque and worship in private at home.) Obviously the ladies of Linqing appreciate this arrangement, since their prayer room at the mosque was packed.

Further south, close to the north bank of the Huanghe (Yellow River), Zhangqiu is now just a small rural town, but it was once a major trading metropolis on the Grand Canal mid-way between Linqing and Jining. It even used to be compared with Suzhou and Hangzhou, the most prosperous of the cities along the lower reaches of the canal.

Its days of glory are long since over, but local residents still proffer one claim to fame. They say that Zhangqiu was the location of the legendary inn where Wu Song, a popular character from *Outlaws* of the Marsh, knocked back his last drink before bouncing off, drunk, to fight the tiger on Jingyang Ridge.

I searched in vain for the Song-style inn they were talking about, but only succeeded in finding an old building tucked away in a wood. It bore no identification and it was only when I entered the central courtyard that I discovered that this too was a mosque. It had a most unusual roof surmounted by three tiny parasol-like turrets, but nobody in the town was able to satisfy my curiosity about the building's history. Obviously there must be many more such 'lost' Moslem relics scattered around the countryside along the Grand Canal.

Translated by Ursula Yeung

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01:11	11:04	19:13	16:34	Cangzhou	09:18	07:57	05:32	14:31
01:50	11:41	19:49	17:11	Botou	-	07:18	-	_
03:02	12:56	21:06	18:20	Dezhou	07:44	06:14	04:06	13:05
04:55	14:53	22:48	20:40	Jinan	05:52	04:31	02:23	11:15
10:24	20:37	04:03	01:55	Xuzhou	00:28	23:15	21:09	06:16
16:06	02:36	09:48	07:34	Nanjing	18:47	17:56	15:11	00:37
17:08	03:38	10:50	08:59	Zhenjiang	17:25	16:44	13:57	23:19
17:35	_		09:41	Danyang	16:55	_	13:27	22:49
18:17	04:38	11:51	10:43	Changzhou	16:18	15:41	12:51	22:14
18:58	05:18	12:30	11:32	Wuxi	15:32	15:02	11:56	21:31
19:38	06:15	13:17	12:06	Suzhou	14:31	14:14	11:09	20:43
20:44	07:22	_		Shanghai		_	09:38	19:21
		17:08		Jiaxing		10:57		
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The Northern Grand Canal - A Climatic Profile

The northern reaches of the Grand Canal are considered to be those between Beijing and Huaiyin in northern Jiangsu, lying in the water-poor but fertile North China Plain. By way of contrast, the Grand Canal south from this point, running down through southern Jiangsu and into northern Zhejiang, passes through lands with rich water resources. The physical geography of the two areas is vastly different, as is the climate. In this issue, in keeping with our major theme, we introduce the climatic conditions in the north.

Arid Spring

The North China Plain is characterized by its warm-temperate semi-humid climate. There are many sunny days in the spring: the average in March, April and May is between 63 and 69%. The annual rainfall in northern China is less than 800 mm, and its distribution over the year is uneven. There are also vast swings in the amount of rainfall from one year to the next. Spring is the time for frequent weather fluctuations, but the air-mass contains little moisture, so there is not much rain, accounting for only about 10% of the annual total. However, evaporation during the same period is between 600 and 720 mm (about one-third of the annual figure).

The lack of rainfall during the early part of the year produces frequent droughts and poses a threat to the growth of autumn-sown crops. The rapid increase in temperature, strong winds, low relative humidity and variable rainfall combine to aggravate the situation. Local proverbs reflect this: Nine out of ten springs are dry.

'Rain in the spring is worth as much as oil', and 'Rain equals food falling from the sky'.

Summer Rains

After the arid spring, summer sets in around early July. Because the air over the land is warmer than that over the ocean and the atmospheric pressure is correspondingly lower, the summer winds blow inland from the sea. Thus the temperature climbs rapidly and the North China Plain becomes a heat focus. The mean temperature in July rises above 26°C.

Statistics show that, most years, 60% of the region's rainfall occurs during the summer months. The figure is even higher for the Hebei Plain. However, the summer rains generally consist of torrential downpours at infrequent intervals, often causing flooding and waterlogging vet resulting in a shortage of effective rainfall, further aggravated by the high temperatures and strong evaporation. Obviously this has an adverse effect on farmland and on water and soil conservation. Nevertheless, this remains one of China's major farming centres, with the possibility of three crops in two years in most areas.

Although people may suffer from the heat during the day, the overnight temperature may be quite moderate — from 21.5 to 22.4°C. When one thinks of the humid, hot summer nights down south, northerners can hardly complain.

Golden Autumn

From September onwards, the temperature drops rapidly. Early autumn

in northern China probably offers the best climate for agricultural purposes, and this is certainly the most comfortable and enjoyable time of year for the region's human inhabitants. Unlike the windy, dusty spring, there is still enough moisture in the ground to retain the topsoil, even though the rainy season is already over. Early September and the month of October produce northern China's 'Indian summer' or — as the Chinese themselves call it — 'golden autumn'.

Winter Conditions

During the winter, under the influence of the Mongolian high pressure centre, temperatures in the region traversed by the northern sections of the Grand Canal tend to be lower than they are at other places in the world on the same latitude. The January mean temperature falls below freezing point, and the passage of a strong cold front may chalk up record lows. A temperature of -27.4° C was recorded in Beijing on 22 February 1966.

Still, northerners are prepared for the harsh conditions, with fires and heaters indoors and plenty of warm quilted clothing to put on outdoors. In fact, it is in the milder south of China, where houses are designed with the emphasis on keeping cool during the summer heat, that you really suffer in the winter time, especially when a humid cold front presses down from the north. Northerners say that they don't like going south during the winter as the temperature may be as low indoors as out!

as out!

Average Climatic Conditions Along Northern Grand Canal

		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Beijing	Temperature (°C)	-4.6	-2.2	4.5	13.1	19.8	24.0	25.8	24.4	19.4	12.4	4.1	-2.7
Deijing	Rainfall (mm)	3.0	7.4	8.6	19.4	33.1	77,8	192.5	212.3	57.0	24.0	6.6	2.6
Cangzhou	Temperature (°C)	-3.9	-1.3	5.3	13.6	20.4	24.8	26.5	25.5	20.7	13.8	5.5	-1.5
Cangzilou	Rainfall (mm)	3.6	5.9	6.7	24.1	32.1	79.0	218.0	170.4	48.0	26.7	11.1	5,1
Dezhou	Temperature (°C)	-3.4	-0.8	6.0	14.0	20.7	25.5	26.9	25.5	20.6	14.1	5.9	-1.0
Deznou	Rainfall (mm)	4.4	6.7	8.8	29.0	31.3	74.5	187.7	145.9	47.9	32.3	16.8	4.7

(Continued from page 25)

The Grand Canal: Glimpses of Land and People (I)

form a peasant army under their leader Song Jiang and pit themselves against the ruling Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). This is something like a Chinese version of Robin Hood and his merry men in Sherwood Forest!

Slightly to the west of the canal is Jingyana Ridge, the setting for the episode in which Wu Song, one of the major outlaws, after imbibing eighteen bowls of the potent local wine, kills a tiger barehanded. Further west is the seat of Yanggu County. At the corner of an intersection in the heart of Yanggu is the Shizilou (Lion Pavilion), from a window of which Wu Song is said to have tossed the man who seduced his sister-in-law and murdered his brother. The original Shizilou was a restaurant built in the late Northern Song and destroyed more than eight hundred years ago. The one we see today was erected during the Qing dynasty in a completely different style. While we were there, videotapes on the life and times of Wu Song were being played.

From Yanggu we crossed the Huanghe at Cailou and headed for Lake Dongping through the marshlands around Liangshan (the outlaws' hideout in the above-mentioned novel). Lake Dongping used to act as a regulating reservoir for the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal.

As we were heading east along an asphalted road, we saw farmers either riding on four-wheeled tractors or in horse-drawn carts, some pulling hand-barrows, as they made their way to the fair at Da'anshan by the lake. One flatbed cart drawn by three young toughs on bicycles overtook us at speed. The cart conveyed a whole family, as well as a huge nest of food containers and some live hens. We accelerated to catch them up and shouted: 'Hey, what's up?' The old lady in the cart, all smiles, gave the reply: 'I want to be with my daughter at her confinement!'

On Confucius' Home Ground

We turned from the lake to continue our journey through Shandong. As we forged south we could not help thinking of Qufu, home of Confucius (552-479 B.C.), and the magnificent

temple, the work of countless centuries, erected in honour of the ancient philosopher and teacher. The temple, which in its present form dates from the Ming dynasty, can be considered second only to the Forbidden City in Beijing and, as it is in many ways connected with the Grand Canal, we felt justified in making a detour to the east.

To give just one example of the canal association, the tablet at the temple bearing the inscription 'The Temple for the Supreme Sage and Past Master Confucius' was a donation from the Qing emperor Kangxi (reign dates 1662-1723). The stone itself was quarried from the Western Hills outside Beijing. After it had been engraved, it was loaded on a ship at Zhangjiawan east of Beijing and shipped along the canal to Jining. From there some six hundred labourers plus 443 oxen conveyed it the remaining fifty or so kilometres to Qufu by sliding it along the ice-covered roads in winter.

The most important of the many other steles in the temple complex are the fifty-two mammoth tablets contributed by sundry emperors, gathered together and housed in thirteen identical pavilions in one of the temple courtyards. But the one donated by Emperor Kangxi is the biggest: seven metres tall and weighing thirty-five tons — sixty-five if you count the weight of the stone bixi (a turtle-like creature) on which it is mounted. It must have been a herculean task indeed to transport such a stone from faraway Beijing and would probably have been impossible without the Grand Canal.

We left Qufu behind us. Once through Jining (home of the poet Li Bai for over twenty years) you come to Jiaxiang County on the west bank of the canal. This, the native place of Zengzi, one of Confucius' students, is otherwise known as the 'land of the *suona*'. As we were passing a village, sure enough, we heard snatches of music floating out. Tracing the source, we found people of many households amusing themselves by playing *suonas* and other wind instruments in a courtyard. They sounded almost like an orchestra.

Through Lake Weishan

The seat of Weishan County is located on the eastern shore of the lake of the same name, southeast of Jiaxiang. The peculiarity here is that the Grand Canal actually cuts across this lake, which stretches 120 kilometres from north to south and is about twenty kilometres across at its widest. The lake was formed in 1194 during one of the Huanghe's frequent floods.

When we reached the lakeside, there was still some time to go before sunset, and the water was alive with fishing boats, coal barges and pleasure boats. There were some young lads playing in the lake. When they spotted us, they swam off to the lotus beds in the distance and plucked a few seed pods which they tied into bundles. They then placed them on their heads and swam back to offer them to us as gifts. The lotus seeds had a sweetish taste.

Strolling around Weishan the following morning, I came across an old man selling pancakes. These were thin and crisp, about a metre in diameter, with a good smell. It was a pity that we were unable to find any spring onions and soya sauce to accompany them, or we could have tried the Shandong speciality of pancakes rolled around these ingredients....

We continued by boat to Hanzhuang at the southeastern tip of the lake, where we passed through the lock system into the River Yijia. This forms the southernmost section of the Lu Canal, its volume of water being regulated solely by that released from Lake Weishan, which means that barges, steamers and other craft can ply this stretch in safety. We ourselves were thus able to use this waterway to travel to Tai'erzhuang, located on the Beijing-Shanghai Railway. The quiet small town on the Shandong border still has ruins of its ancient walls to show. On the streets young girls, their hair in plaits, were hawking sesame cakes. It was noon. As I munched this typical northern fare, I let my thoughts stray to my next stop, which would introduce me to the southern sections of the Grand Canal....

Translated by Ren Jiazhen

N E W S



CISE's Expanding Service

For the last three years the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Centre for International Scientific Exchanges (CISE) has been promoting scientific exchanges, arranging conferences and exhibitions, but also assisting foreign academics and scientists with their travel plans within China.

Apart from tailor-made itineraries for individuals, CISE now also offers a number of fixed tours with a particular scientific bias. For example, a desert study and glaciology tour covers Beijing, Urümqi, the Turpan Basin, Dunhuang, Lanzhou and Guangzhou. For those with an interest in zoology and botany, there is a tour from Beijing to Kunming and Xishuangbanna in Yunnan, also terminating in Guangzhou.

CISE is able to liaise with many associated specialist institutes in China to organize international scientific explorations and mountain-climbing expeditions. Our photo shows a joint Sino-Japanese expedition camped at 4,500 metres in the Himalayan foothills.

The address of this organisation is 52 Sanlihe Road, Beijing 100864, China. Telex: 22747 ASCHI CN. Fax: 8011095.



Clues to the Hongshan Culture

A recent haul of relics from an 8,000-year-old site in the village of Chahai near Fuxin in Liaoning Province included four polished jade earrings, their colours still vivid. Among other items unearthed were uniquely shaped pottery, a large quantity of polished agate articles, and stone farming and cooking implements.

Only a small part of the site, which covers more than 10,000 square metres in all, has so far been excavated. However, the dig has already brought to light what appear to be the remains of eight semi-underground dwellings.

Archaeologists believe that the relics represent further clues to the neolithic Hongshan Culture of northeastern China, named after a village near Chifeng in Inner Mongolia where the first finds were made in the 1930s.



Superimposed Tombs Discovered in Jiangsu

A group of tombs has been discovered in Suining County in northwestern Jiangsu, consisting of three superimposed layers. The uppermost layer dates from the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911), the middle layer from the Han and Tang dynasties (206 B.C.-A.D. 907) and the lowest and earliest stratum dates from the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.), with two metres of silt between each stratum. The discovery of these tombs has proved invaluable in tracing the ancient course of the Yellow River.





Epic Motor Challenges

This September saw the successful conclusion of the Paris-Beijing Youth Cross is '8 Motor Rally. The rally, a 'first' on such a scale, began in Paris on 12 July and covered twelve countries and 18,000 kilometres. The sixty-one men and seven women who participated had many hair-raising stories to tell by the time they reached Beijing on 2 September.

Another marathon motoring challenge is currently at the planning stage. Around 150 drivers are expected to retrace the of of one of the world's epic journey— the 12,800-kilometre journey made in the historic Motor Challenge of 1907.

This venture is being organized by the travel company Vovages Jules Verne and has involved years of careful diplomacy to obtain permission from the Soviet and Chinese authorities to enter remote areas and use border crossings normally barred to foreigners. The journey will start in 1990 from London's Marble Arch and finish in Beijing's Tian'anmen Square around fiftysix days later. Unlike the 1907 Challenge, when camel trains were despatched along the route loaded with petrol cans to act as refuelling points, the 1990 contestants will be escorted by an 80-strong back-up team.



Jin Tombstone Discovered

A two-metre-high tombstone of a ruler of the Jin dynasty (1115-1234) has been found in the area of the Yunfeng Mountains about one hundred kilometres southwest of Beijing — the first such find since 1949.

According to historical records, the area served as the burial grounds for twelve emperors as well as princes and dukes of the dynasty after Beijing was chosen as the capital in 1153.

It is known that many of the tombs were plundered during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), but archaeologists are now more optimistic about finding some of them intact.



Electric Rail Network Expands

Only eight percent — or some 4,800 kilometres — of China's railway system is currently electrified, but the relevant authorities are gradually increasing this figure. A 234-kilometre section of electrified track between Sanmenxia in Henan and Xi'an in Shaanxi has just been put into service to complete the electrification of the Zhengzhou-Xi'an line.

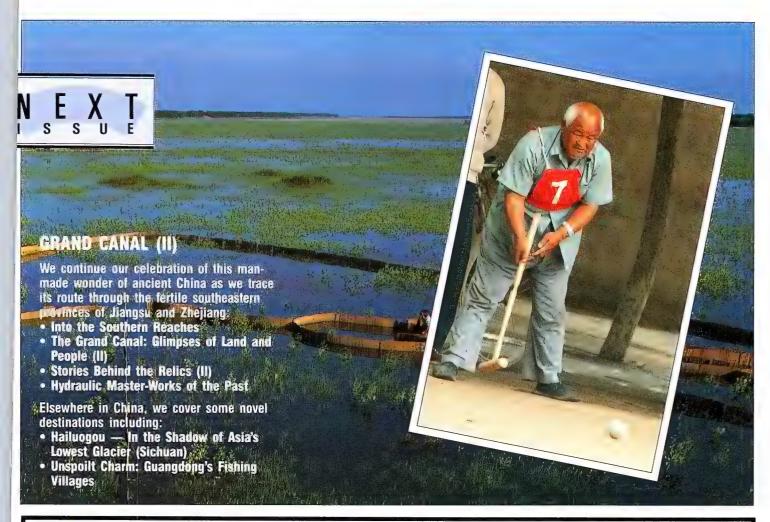


The so-called Yin-Shang Ruins at Anyang in Henan Province are the site of what is thought to have been China's first true capital, the political, economic, cultural and military centre of the Shang dynasty (16th-11th century B.C.). Twelve kings of the late Shang period ruled there for 273 years. Archaeologists have so far unearthed ruined foundations of fiftythree palaces, archives of pictographs inscribed on oracle bones and shells, bronzeware, the remains of a prison, and cemeteries for both nobles and commoners

To protect these priceless relics whilst allowing access to researchers and visitors, the authorities have recreated the site as a huge garden museum covering forty hectares. It is surrounded by walls with a dam on one side for protection against the River Huanhe.

Three buildings have been reconstructed. Two of them imitate the architectural style of the time, without a single brick or tile. The third is a memorial hall to Fuhao, a royal concubine who was also a warrior; she used to participate in affairs of state and preside over sacrificial rites. This wooden structure with a thatched roof was erected on the original foundations of the memorial temple over her well-preserved tomb, which was excavated in 1976 and yielded some two thousand relics.

The museum complex is now open to the general public but work continues, including renovation of a bronze workshop site.





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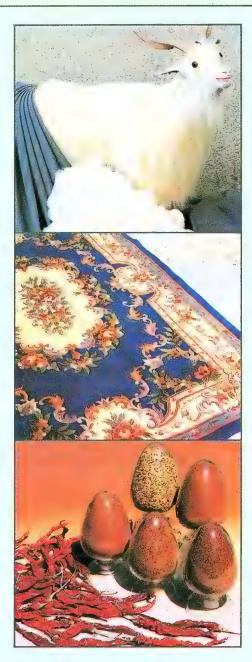
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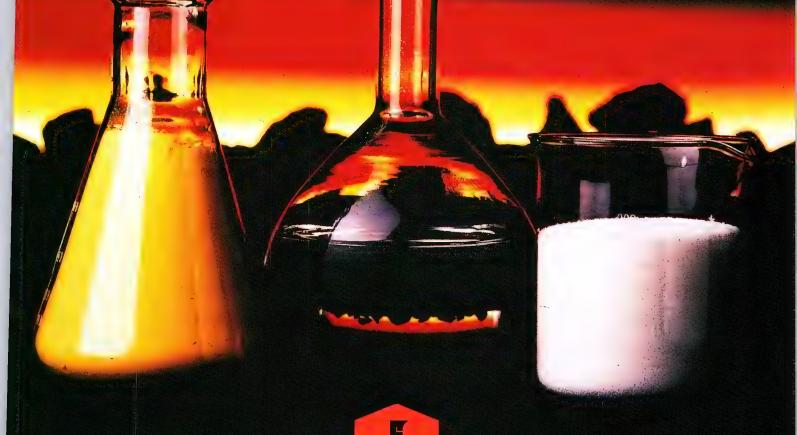
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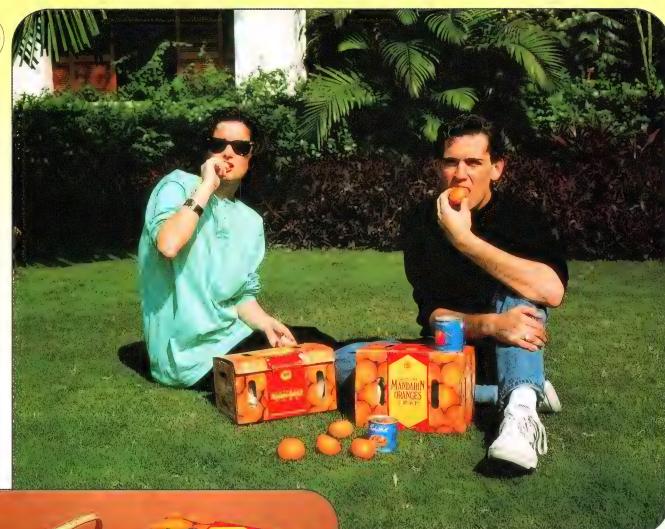
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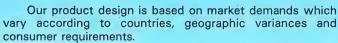
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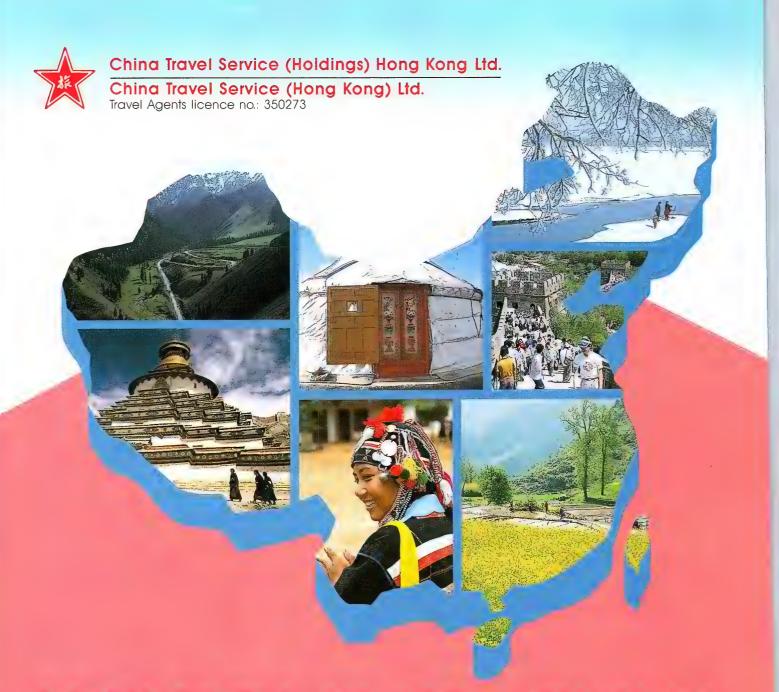


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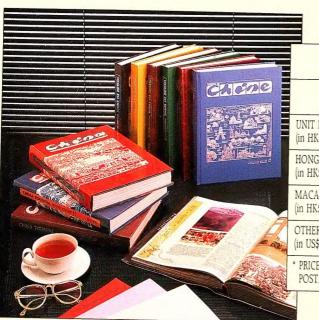
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